LEVIATHAN AS HOBBES'S NARRATIVE OF SALVATION

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Salvation is the central theme of *Leviathan*. That is, it is a proposal for a rational form of government established for the purpose of immediate salvation on the basis of principles that could be trusted as certain, setting the foundation for a new science of politics that could no longer rely on prudence or prophecy. By comparing the Hobbesian narrative of salvation to the Hebrew narrative, what becomes clear is that Hobbes's real agenda is dealing with the problems of social chaos and the competition of obligations to political and religious authorities by presenting the state as the ultimate salvific system. Hobbes used a narrative structure to tell a new story that was more trustworthy than other historical accounts and the biblical narrative, which, according to *Leviathan*, was not only not trustworthy but deceptive and seditious.

Accepted by:

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Acknowledgements

Bacon said, "Reading makes a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man." The first challenge Hobbes poses to his reader is *nosce te ipsum*, which he translates as "Read Thy Self." It would be impossible for a student with a desire to understand Hobbes and a life filled with responsibility to undergo a task like this without realizing the sacrifices others must make so that one has the chance to read anything worth writing about.

First, I would like to thank the one who taught me to read with fire in my heart, tears in my eyes, and questions too sacred to be ignored: my mother. It was from her that I learned that only through the brokenness comes the truly beautiful. I pray that when my big feet are finally worn from wandering through school books, the Lord will lead me to spend more time reading with her.

This thesis is about the relationship between salvation and the state. I want to thank my greatest friend, Bruce Nettleton, who forced me to see that loving God is identical to honoring the commitments one makes to another. He not only taught me how to read the most important books, but opened his home to me so that I could learn to listen to the needs of others.

I also want to thank my teachers, especially Stephen Lange, who valued me enough to teach me to ask questions that matter—and learn to be patient with irresolution.

Every page that follows is dedicated to my wife, who has taught me what a covenant in action really looks like. It is because of her tireless effort and her patience

as we have lived out these few years with very late nights and very early mornings and no real time to "read" each other that this was written.

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Introduction

Salvation is *sine qua non* of *Leviathan.* Whether one assumes Hobbes's main driving force was the attempt firmly to root political and ethical theory in scientific methodology or to lay down a practical guide that will bring about real civic stability, the practical and theoretical ends are one and the same—salvation.[1] That this has not been widely pointed out is perhaps due to the fact that the meaning of the term 'salvation' has been watered down in Western cultures until it is most often conceived of in religious terms that actually contradict the word's meaning. As N. T. Wright has noted, "If 'salvation' means simply 'leaving behind the world of space, time and matter', then this is not really 'salvation'."[2] Salvation, as I mean it here, refers to an act of rescuing, preserving, defending, and securing—in other words, providing safety to those who need saving. It is my thesis that Hobbes's ultimate intention was to present humanity as needing to be saved, and therefore, needing *Leviathan*, which he engineered to be a system of political salvation.

That *Leviathan* is to be seen as both theory and praxis is evident from its centermost passage, where Hobbes explains, "I recover some hope, that one time or other, this writing of mine, may fall into the hands of a Soveraign, who will consider it himselfe...and...convert this Truth of Speculation, into the Utility of Practice" (xxxi, 193).* Salvation is always conceived as a narrative; it is always an event that

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* All citations from the English version of Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* used in this essay are chapter, followed by the page of the original 1651 text, which is readily available in all scholarly editions. I have relied on Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, or, The Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-Wealth*

brings about a change from a state of depravation to a state of release from that depravation.[3] *Leviathan* lays out a theory aimed at presenting a narrative of how humanity can move from a state of chaos to a state of order, from fear to security, from war to peace. Is this narrative historical, philosophical, or religious? Is it a salvation narrative meant to tell how things became the way they are, a narrative to express how things should be, or simply a hope for some future salvation with no real regard for the chaos or conflict of the current life? The purpose of this thesis is to show that *Leviathan*'s main agenda is to determine where salvation can be found, who has the authority to construct or retell this narrative, and thus, who ultimately sits in the real "Seat of Power."[4]

By looking at Hobbes's view of the role of history in relation to his understanding of salvation, the major political elements discussed in *Leviathan*, particularly obligation and representation, can be more fully understood. Moreover, it becomes clear that Hobbes uses a scientific methodology to present a narrative framework that is presumed to be more trustworthy than history or revelation. That is, Hobbes does not just logically construct a system of politics based on a self-evident view of human nature. He aims to use scientific methodology to provide the conceptual framework for a salvation narrative meant to trump historical and religious based narratives in providing guidance for constructing a peaceful ordering of civil society. Hobbes's objective is to provide a new salvation that is accessible

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Ecclesiasticall and Civill, ed. Ian Shapiro (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), though there is no major difference between this version and that of Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

here and now and present it as the only salvation worth seeking. Polemically, the Leviathanian narrative presents a theory of sovereignty based on representation rather than divine right. Politically, this narrative provides the logical justification for one's obligation to obey the laws of the civil sovereign as a way of securing this 'here and now' salvation. Theologically, Hobbes's narrative clarifies what type of salvation one can expect to receive from God if one is also to expect the civil sovereign to provide political peace and security, especially when conflicts arise between religious and civil power.

The salvation narrative produced by the logic of *Leviathan* is expected to serve as a reformation for historical and religious teachings about salvation, as shown in the following three tasks. After a brief review of the literature, I will first discuss Hobbes's understanding of salvation in comparison to the narrative and method of *Leviathan*. This will illuminate how Hobbes intends for his narrative to combat the problems of historical and religious knowledge. In other words, this first task will be concerned with showing how the salvation narrative of *Leviathan*, which is rooted in certainty, is aimed at overcoming the problems of prophecy and prudence. These problems arise in the learning and relaying of historical and religious facts and underline the importance of narrative in teaching precepts. In this way, I will show that the explanations about political and religious salvation in *Leviathan* are essential to the narrative of salvation underlying the logic of Hobbes's political theory.

Once the relation between Leviathanian history and salvation are understood, the second task will be to show that the political elements of *Leviathan*—particularly

representation and obligation—depend on Hobbes's salvation narrative. Finally, the third task will be to show that to justify his argument, it was necessary for Hobbes to present a way of reading Hebrew Scripture—and thus a way of retelling Hebrew salvation history—that supports the political system and discourages sedition and revolt.

Noticing the Salvific Role of *Leviathan*

That salvation is a major theme in *Leviathan* has not gone unnoticed. When salvation is considered in relation to the role of the artificial state, however, it is often overlooked or mentioned only in passing. Salvation seems, for many who discuss *Leviathan,* only a religious theme that has very little to do with the overall aims of the rest of Hobbes's political theory. However, Michael Oakeshott[5] does more than pass it by when he discusses the Latin introduction to *Leviathan.*[*] It is interesting how easily a simple word can be overlooked and how much difference it can make when it is noticed. Seventeen years after its original publication in English, *Leviathan*'s Latin version reveals and important change in Hobbes's wording. As Oakeshott discusses, Hobbes introduces the leviathan in nearly the same way, with one slight but significant difference, as shown in the table below.[6]

[*] Citations from the Latin version of *Leviathan* are cited as OP: chapter, followed by the page of the 1668 text from Thomas Hobbes, *Thomæ Hobbes Malmesburiensis Opera Philosophica Quæ Latine Scripsit Omnia,* ed. Sir William Molesworth, vol. 3 (London: Bohn, 1839).

English (1651)	Oakeshott's Translation	Latin (1668)
For by Art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMON-WEALTH, or STATE, (in latine CIVITAS) which is but an Artificiall Man; though of greater stature and strength than the Naturall, for whose **protection and defence** it was intended.	This great Leviathan, which is called the state, is a work of art; it is an artificial man made for the **protection and salvation** of the natural man, to whom it is superior in grandeur and power.	*Magnus ille Leviathan, quae civitas appellature, opificium artis est et homo artificialis, quanquam homine naturali, propter cujus* ***protectionem et salutem*** *excogitatus est, et mole et robore multo major.*

While Oakeshott does not explicitly point out that the Latin version is different than the English, he seems to have noticed. While the English version explains that the role of the artificial leviathan (the state) is the "protection and defense" of humanity, the Latin version describes the role as "*protectionem et salutem*" (protection and salvation). One wonders why Hobbes did not simply use "*protectionem et defensionem,*" since this would have been a more direct translation of his original English version, that is, unless one notices that Hobbes intended a different readership for his Latin version and that in the earlier 1660s some Anglican bishops threatened that Hobbes would be tried for heresy.[7]

One may point out that *salutem* and 'defense' are closely related enough that it is unsound to assume that this difference is in any way significant. However, Hobbes himself specifically says, "*Vitæ autem æternæ gaudia comprehenduntur a Scriptoribus Sacris sub nomine* **salutis** *sive* salvationis"(OP: xxxviii, 330, boldface added). His English version reads, "The joyes of Life Eternall, are in Scripture comprehended all under the name of SALVATION, or Being Saved" (xxxviii, 245).

It is not inconceivable to assume that, since Hobbes understood salvation in scripture to be referred to under the same names "***salutis*** [or] *salvation* is," he should expect us to read his own *salutis* in the same way—that the role of leviathan and Hobbes's understanding of salvation were related.

Oakeshott uses this phrase to point out that the importance of salvation is central to most of the masterpieces of political philosophy including *Leviathan*. He continues, "political philosophy…is the consideration of the relation between civil association and eternity." So in *Leviathan*, it is easy to see that, as Oakeshott explains, "the *civitas* is conceived as the deliverance of a man observed to stand in need of deliverance." Oakeshott goes on to say that "[w]hen we turn to make this enquiry of the great political philosophies, we find that, each in its own convention, they maintain the view that civil association is contributory to the fulfillment of an end which it cannot itself bring about."[8] Oakeshott seems to suggest that salvation is one of those ideas that "distinguishes Hobbes from all earlier and most later writers,"[9] yet it is surprising that this topic has not gathered more interest.

Perhaps this is, as J. G. A. Pocock has pointed out, because the third and fourth books of *Leviathan* "have been seriously neglected by scholars because the subject matter is exegesis and eschatology, not philosophy, with the result that it was assumed that they could not matter and Hobbes could not have meant them seriously."[10] Pocock makes great strides in pointing out the importance of Hobbes's view of "sacred history" and has caused many scholars, not the least of whom is Patricia Springborg, to focus more on Hobbes's religious ideas. Even so, Pocock only

casually mentions the salvific role of *Leviathan* in saying that Hobbes's "history of prophetic authority has been projected into an eschatological future. His politics have taken on a messianic dimension, just as the messianism they entail is almost brutally political."[11]

Patricia Springborg has unquestionably made much of discussing Hobbes's emphasis on the role of ecclesiastical history, church authority, and religious beliefs.[12] Her influence and many of her insights about the competition of authority will be noticeable in the arguments that follow, yet she rarely calls attention to the way Hobbes's historical ideas and religious insights concerning salvation make his political theory all the more intelligible.

Kinch Hoekstra does, however, take note of it. He explains that Hobbes was less concerned with persuading the apolitical individuals to come together and form a commonwealth than with calling together those who are already citizens to "a punctilious obedience," seeing that "salvation is already theirs; they need only embrace it."[13] However, Hoekstra notices this saving role of the state because his goal was to draw out a discussion about the natural state of humanity and compare Hobbes's view to others, especially the various prelapsarian Christian traditions. In doing so, he arrives at much the same conclusion about Hobbes's view of the role of the commonwealth as this thesis. Drawing on the work of Christopher Love, Hoekstra compares the Apostle Paul's address in Ephesians 2 (emphasizing verse 12) with Hobbes's description of the natural state of humanity. In both, Hoekstra points out, humanity lacks law and commonwealth (in Paul's writings, this means 'aliens to the

commonwealth of Israel') and is in a condition of misery and damnation. In both of these statements Hoekstra appears to point out how Hobbes's theory revolves around an idea of salvation. Nevertheless, Hoekstra does not follow this thought through any further than this.[14]

Similarly, Roberto Farneti argues that salvation was an important concept in *Leviathan.*[15] He explains, as will be pointed out again later, that during Hobbes's time, a clear understanding about what 'salvation' meant and what was required for it was a key concept in the political literature resulting from the civil wars. Yet, Farneti's argument focuses entirely on Hobbes's conception of 'eternal salvation' without any reflection that the idea of salvation might play a larger role in Hobbes's political theory. He suggests that Hobbes uses Apostle Paul's vocabulary and framework to come up with his own political theology where salvation plays a pivotal role, but again Farneti simply means 'eternal salvation.'

Like Pocock, Luc Borot presents an instructive argument about how history plays a pivotal role in Hobbes's thought.[16] He clearly presents Hobbes's view of the function of history as a teacher. In his discussion, he refers to the thirty-eighth chapter of *Leviathan* to make the following claim. "The fundamental antimillenarism of Hobbes's exegesis is here again, to smother the serpent of the chiliastic expectations that prompt men of misdirected faith and energy to rebel against the lawful authority of their kings—who yet are kings by God's laws—led to it by the preachers' use of incomprehensible words."[17] The argument here is that there is something more in Hobbes's discussion about sacred history and history as a teacher that invites us to

pay closer attention to the parallels between the Hebrew history of salvation and the 'ahistorical' narrative of salvation Hobbes lays out in *Leviathan*.

Just as Borot and Springborg nearly arrive at the same conclusion that Pocock had, though he did not explore it, that Hobbes's leviathan stands as the savior of mankind, Bryan Garsten[18] comes similarly close following Quentin Skinner[19] in his discussion of Hobbes's theory of representation. Garsten showed how Hobbes's strange theory of representation allowed for an understanding of the civil sovereign as both the representative of the multitude of the people and the representative of God. As Garsten explains it, this allowed for an understanding of the sovereign in a way that "turned" the language of the Parliamentarians and simultaneously avoided the political instability that was the central problem with the notion of rule by divine right. In the revealing way he explains the relationship between these two functions of Hobbes's rhetoric, what Garsten comes close to mentioning, but does not point out, is the underlying importance of the role salvation pays in the Leviathenian theory of representation.

Leon H. Craig, in his recent revealing work on Hobbes, *The Platonian Leviathan*, hints at, and comes very close to stating explicitly, the messianic role Hobbes places on the state. On the very same page of text, Craig explores several important related themes. He presents Hobbes's contrast between civil and divine authority as deriving from the power to control life and death. He explains that the "role of the supernatural within religion, and the irrational beliefs in general, must be reduced to manageable proportions if a rational political science is to prevail." He

also makes an interesting comment on a quote from Hobbes: "*Reason* is the *pace*, Encrease of *Science,* the *way*, and Benefit of man-kind, the *end*" (v, 22). Realizing Hobbes is simultaneously talking about metaphors and senseless speech and Hobbes has warned his reader against using "the way" as a phrase when reckoning about something (v, 20), Craig comments, "Jesus is not 'the way.' Science is."[20] Craig's additional note explains that Hobbes intends to show indirectly that "the only faith humans need is faith in Reason."[21]

While Craig has noticed the important authority Hobbes places on reason, even claiming that Hobbes intends to replace Jesus with science and faith with reason, he does not explore the connection between their perspective roles at length. If one were to consider even slightly the implication that 'Jesus' is a transliterated form of a Hebrew name that means 'salvation,' one would not miss that Craig's reading of Hobbes clearly points to something of great significance about the role of leviathan, both as the name for the 'mortal god' character in Hobbes's narrative and the narrative itself. However, there is something deeper here, which Craig is touching on but not making explicit. Hobbes's emphasis on reason to provide the grounds for salvation is not just an idea that is contrary to the biblical account (though Hobbes would deny this); the emphasis on reason is not just aimed at curbing the political problems that prophecy and divine revelation present. Hobbes actually aims at replacing the expectation for divinely ordered salvation with a salvation that is directed purely by reason. Moreover, what this thesis will show is that this intention of Hobbes encompasses the entire narrative and theory of *Leviathan.*

Leo Strauss makes the clear argument that Hobbes's insight into human nature was the driving force of his theory and method.[22] As Strauss argues, at the fertile moment when Hobbes developed his political theory, "the classical and theological tradition was already shaken, and a tradition of modern science [had] not yet [been] formed and established."[23] It was in this fertile moment, which Farneti also explored, that Hobbes asks the questions of the right life and the right order of society. However, Strauss says that Hobbes chose to use the scientific method because he could only choose between the philosophical tradition and modern science.[24] There was another method, reliance on religious doctrine. Strauss points out that the philosophical tradition presupposed a traditional view of humanity, while modern science did not lend itself well to beginning with a moral attitude. What Strauss does not mention, at least in this stage of his argument, is that scripture also presented a view of human nature. Strauss argues that this is the basis of Hobbes's contradictions and is necessary to get an adequate interpretation of Hobbes's philosophy and recognize its principles.[25] One of the important insights Strauss makes, then, is to point out that when Hobbes argued that priestly rule was inconsistent with reason, and then presented the places where scripture vouched for priestly rule, Hobbes was no longer presenting "an argument for priestly rule, but an argument against Scripture."[26]

There are several other important insights Strauss has made about Hobbes's theory which are relevant to the current discussion. As Luc Borot would later do, Strauss presented a thorough argument of the role that history played in presenting a narrative from which moral precepts could be gained. Similarly, he asked the ever

important question in political philosophy about what Hobbes thought was the ultimate good. Strauss suggests that Hobbes did not have an ultimate good, but only a supreme evil, which was death: "For death is not only the negation of the primary good, but is therewith the negation of all goods, including the greatest good: and at the same time, death—being the *summum malum*, while there is no *summum bonum*—is the only absolute standard by reference to which man may coherently order his life."[27] In putting it this way, Strauss has pointed out (although not by using the same exact phrasing) that salvation from death is at least one good for which Hobbes's political philosophy aims.

In Strauss's essay on Hobbes in *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, he argues that religion and science, in the sense of technology, are aimed toward the same end, which is seeking after causes in order to serve the happiness of mankind—which is safety and security from the fear of death by violence. In this sense, religion is not in opposition to reason, with respect to ends; religion is only "an attempt made with ineffective means."[28] In terms of morality, Strauss argues that Hobbes views the relationship between religion and science as opposites, because religion is rooted in the prime political evil of *gloratio* (boasting). This is because political life is "animated by the spirit of peace and civil society, [where] we see reason and religion opposed one to the other, from beginning to end."[29]

In this vein, Strauss makes the major claim that the current argument aims to follow. While often quoted and misquoted, it is worth repeating here as it lays a solid

background for the arguments that will flow from my major thesis about Hobbes's theory of salvation.

> Hobbes distinguishes between the 'natural seed of religion' (anxiety and dreams), and the 'culture' which religion took on within paganism and then revelation. The culture of religion takes as its aim the education of mankind to obedience, peace, love and ordered society. For the pagans, religion was a part of politics. The pagan legislators and founders of states brought it about, by the establishment of suitable institutions, that the populace should never even contemplate rebellion, but remain content with bread and circuses. The powerful Romans tolerated every type of religion within their city with the exception of Judaism, in which obedience to a mortal king was forbidden. The view which is here thus referred back to the Jews is contested by Hobbes as rebellious and likely to lead to rebellion. Obedience to the established power is never sin. Rather, rebellion against established authority is sin. Revelation, the second path opened to the culture of natural religion with its basis in fear and dream, makes politics a part of religion. It thus, if we understand Hobbes aright, reverses the natural relationship which was realized in paganism.[30]

Carl Schmitt follows an argument somewhat similar, suggesting as well that Hobbes not only "destroyed the tradition and legitimate foundations for asserting divine right" but wanted to unite religion and politics together under a "monarchical belief."[31] Schmitt's argument, however, was that *Leviathan* was both a success and a failure. It was a success in that it was able to conceptualize the state as a political mechanism that operated on the "value-and-truth neutrality of a technical instrument."[32] However, *Leviathan* was a failure because it allowed for the right of

private freedom of thought and belief in the political system that would later be exploited by Spinoza and others, to turn the state into an "external cult." As Schmitt argues, "This contained the seed of death that destroyed the mighty leviathan from within and brought about the end of the mortal god."[33]

What Schmitt has pointed out is the serious and important contrast between religion and political devotion that Hobbes's political theory wrestles with from beginning to end. Schmitt makes the most of this complex dichotomy by pointing out Hobbes's critique of miracles while simultaneously expanding on the important beginning phrase of *Leviathan* where humanity mimics the work of God through creating the "artificial man." Schmitt asks, "Who is this god who brings peace and security to people tormented by anguish, who transforms wolves into citizens and through this miracle proves himself to be a god, obviously a 'mortal god,' a *deus mortalis,* as Hobbes called him?"[34] If one gives much thought to Schmitt's question and his argument, it becomes evident that, while he may have seen the *Leviathan* in some ways to be a failure, his prose certainly goes a long way toward paying Hobbes homage.

A fuller account that directly hits Hobbes's use of theological language to combat the seditious political nature of miracles and revelation is Joel Schwartz's discussion in his article "Hobbes and the Two Kingdoms of God."[35] Schwartz summarizes Hobbes's position from the forty-fourth chapter of *Leviathan,* that "the greatest and main abuse of Scripture" (xliv, 334) is using it to prove that the "Jewish kingdom of God" can exist in the present. He does not shy away from pushing

Strauss's argument a bit further by saying that the particular conception of the kingdom of God that assumes divine intervention in the current world (that is, the perspective of God in the Hebraic tradition) threatens the authority of the sovereign.

In summary, what Strauss, Schmitt, and Schwartz have suggested here is that Hobbes aimed to unite (or re-unite) religion and politics so that religion is again a part of politics (rather than the reverse). This is an important point that I will further elaborate. What is interesting, however, is how Hobbes does this and what it means in terms of Hobbes's view of God and religion. As is seen in Strauss's point about religion—"The culture of religion takes as its aim the education of mankind to obedience, peace, love and ordered society"—religion aims at education, not worship of a divine savior. That is, obedience, peace, love, and order are ends for which the human efforts that are somehow encompassed in religion are merely means. As this thesis will point out, the analysis of Strauss, Schmitt, and Schwarts is helpful, but it does not point out that Hobbes was able to arrive at the formula of "obedience to the established power is never sin," though it is an exact reversal of the biblical mandate which he used as evidence to support his claim. What this thesis will point out is how Hobbes was able to present this reversal through his Leviathanian political theory of salvation and his reworking the central teachings of Judaism and Christianity as presented in the Ten Commandments.

Despite the clear-cut and candid readings of Strauss, Schmitt, and Schwartz and their pointing out what I take to be the most important questions in *Leviathan,* an even more revealing and straightforward perspective on Hobbes's political theory was

made in the argument of William Cavanaugh in his *Theopolitical Imagination.*[36] As a theologian who has focused much of his effort on presenting the theological-political problem as one of the central problems (if not *the* central problem) of faith, Cavanaugh boldly addresses what he sees to be the major aims of the political philosophy of Hobbes. In the opening pages of the first chapter, called "The Myth of the State as Savior," Cavanaugh begins offering his own reading of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau in order to show that their aim was to "save humanity from the pernicious effects of disunity through the mechanism of the state."[37] While I have come to agree with his conclusion, students of political theory cannot simply take a theologian at his word without asking for more than a mere theological aphorism. We must ask for a more thorough reading and for the provision of evidence and argument directly concerning Hobbes's theory, or the theories of any of the political philosophers he criticizes, before determining if Cavanaugh's position is justified. This is what the current thesis aims to accomplish.

There are certainly many more Hobbes scholars and, indeed, much more scholarship on the topic than is possible to recount for the current purposes. What this short review of some of the literature has presented, however, is that Hobbes's intention for *Leviathan* to be a treatise about the salvific role of the state is not one that has gone unnoticed by scholars, and yet has not been fully examined and developed. What the following discussion aims to accomplish, then, is to build on the scholarship that has just been mentioned and achieve two important goals. First, this discussion will follow more thoroughly Cavanaugh's directive and show clearly that

salvation was more than just a major religious doctrine for Hobbes, and that he intended to do more than just minimalize Christian salvation for the sake of his political agenda, but that creating a system of comprehensive salvation apart from divine intervention was the theme that provided the conceptual framework for his entire theory and narrative. Second, I will show that many important interpretive insights, not far removed from those just mentioned, can be seen to derive directly from Hobbes's use of salvation ideas.

The Narrative of Salvation

It is not hard to see that Hobbes's *Leviathan* lays out a narrative of salvation. The process of progressing from a state of fear to a state of peace and security can only be made intelligible in the context of a narrative. In other words, the explanatory power of salvation lies in its narrative formation. Hobbes's genius is to present the state not as a natural or divine institution but as a saving institution developed by human beings in order to rescue themselves from the natural state of chaos and war.

It has already been suggested that confusion can arise as to what the term 'salvation' actually means. Answering this question is at the heart of Hobbes's agenda. To begin with, much confusion comes from the fact that salvation could be understood as theological, political, or both theological and political. In any case, it must not be overlooked that salvation is always in reference to a kind of saving. It involves being saved or rescued from something or for some special purpose. Salvation is most often used in reference to a stronger being who has brought

deliverance from some kind of danger or disaster. Thus, it will be important for the current argument to recognize who is the savior, who is being saved, and from what they need saving.

Salvation can be thought of as an "other worldly" theological concept, such as is often suggested in the Christian beliefs about salvation from the powers of sin and death. Salvation can also be an expression of an important "this worldly" political concept, in the form of rescuing the citizenry from military defeat, providing safety in dangerous situations, or being forgiven for some criminal act that deserved punishment. In both cases, salvation is understood as a saving action that brings a state of safety (peace, security, forgiveness, etc.) provided by a savior to someone or some group in need of being saved. Of course, conflict may arise when there is a misunderstanding about who was, is, or will be the actor that saves those who need to be saved.

This discussion will show that while Hobbes does not think all theological ideas about salvation are problematic—as can be seen in his repeated suggestion that "to Repent, and to Beleeve that Jesus is the Christ, is all that is required to Salvation" (xliii, 329)—he wants to make it clear that religious salvation must not conflict with the established political institution's salvific role, that is, so long as the political institution can be trusted to fulfill this role, having been developed with care and the certainty of method and reason. Salvation in civil and political life requires the establishment of laws, which are obligatory to ensure the state of salvation continues, rather than just mere principles that serve as moral suggestions. Similarly, a system of

authority derives from the ability of the political system to provide and maintain the salvation of its subjects. In *Leviathan,* this salvific system is the sole means of bringing order from chaos, security from fear, peace from war, and life rather than death.

To deal with theological ideas of salvation, Hobbes confronts Hebrew and Christian soteriology directly. In its Hebrew context, salvation is most often understood in relation to God's covenant with the people of Israel and the evidence of God's keeping of his promises as shown through his rescuing of the people of Israel from foreign powers. In this sense, salvation simply refers to being liberated, being delivered, or being victorious.[38] The Hebrew salvation narrative is made especially clear through the observance of the several holy days that annually retell the narrative of God's saving power. As will be shown later, Hobbes uses the concept of salvation in relationship to the process of forming political covenant outlined in *Leviathan* as a way of discussing Israel's relationship to Moses and the Israelites' obligation to obedience of the Mosaic laws. That is, the ordering of Hobbes's narrative theory of salvation in *Leviathan* begins with the formation of a covenant that then establishes political authority because of its assurance to bring salvation which in turn forms the basis for obedience. Similarly, Hobbes explains the exodus story in a way that also reframes the relationship between political and theological salvation.

In Christianity, it is generally agreed that salvation is centered on the events of the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus. It is important, however, to ask the following: What is Christian salvation meant to be a salvation from? Is it a salvation

from sin and thereby from punishment in hell? Or, in a more positive light, is it instead of salvation "from" a salvation "for" the Kingdom of God and thereby for the reward of heaven? These beliefs may manifest themselves as problems in gaining and maintaining political allegiance from those who need to be politically directed. It is important to note, though, that if one answers these questions in a particular way, they can seem quite removed from the previous Hebrew ideas about salvation. In fact, if one does not believe in the idea of life after death, these ways of looking at salvation may seem to have very little relevance in terms of one's political reality and everyday life.

While salvation is at the core of the Christian tradition, there have been a wide variety of intellectual approaches to understanding salvation throughout Christian history. Because narrative is constitutive of soteriology[39] and narrative assumes a particular ordering of events, it is important to clarify some of the common questions that arise about the chronology of salvation in the Christian traditions. In other words, it is often asked if salvation is something that has happened, is currently happening, or will happen in the future.

As Alister McGrath points out, it is tempting to use a simplistic approach to this chronological question. In relation to the Apostle Paul's discussions about justification and sanctification, one may attempt to force justification, sanctification, and salvation into a chronological *ordo salutis* of past–present–future. Salvation, then, is seen only as a future event, which is "already anticipated and partially experienced in the past event of justification and the present event of sanctification,

and dependent on them."[40] However, the orthodox Christian perspective of salvation must be understood as something that is past, present, and future. In simple terms, as McGrath explains, "the Christian understanding of salvation presupposes that something *has* happened, that something *is now happening,* and that something further *will still happen.*"[41]

Salvation has meant various things throughout Christian history. For Athanasius of Alexandria in the fourth century, salvation was about "being made divine," which meant that humanity was able to participate in the being of God.[42] Over the course of Christian history, it has also been referred to as one being seen as righteous in the sight of God, the attainment of personal holiness, the discovery of an authentic human existence, the gift of spiritual freedom, or some combination of several of these. Even as the Nicene Creed codified the belief that "[f]or us and for our salvation [Jesus] came down from heaven," and qualified the term salvation with the phrase "[w]e look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come." This refers to past and future; no elaboration about what salvation means for the current life has become the authoritative standard. Therefore, while certain concepts and beliefs have been clarified through doctrine, no clear meaning of 'salvation' that has significant implications for the needs of the current situation of life was ever determined and established as a standard part of Christian belief. Instead, different interpretations about what salvation means have found prominence in different periods of church history.[43] The fact that there has been so much

disagreement among Christians about the meaning of the central doctrine of salvation has important implications for a political theorist like Hobbes.

The New Testament's most thorough discussion of salvation is found in the letters of the Apostle Paul. The language of Paul's letters proved difficult, as Roberto Farneti quotes Robert Boyle as having commented: "[a]lthough the language is Greek, the idiom is Semitic."[44] In Hobbes's day, the difficulty in arriving at a final determination on the Christian understanding about salvation, however, was due to several important factors. Prior to the Reformation, the Papal See held the final say on the interpretation of theological ideas and what was necessary for salvation. With the Reformation and its emphasis on *sola scriptura*, a sense of urgency arose in the need to forge a final determination about ideas like salvation. After the Reformation, it became necessary for commentators of the Christian New Testament to wrestle anew with the concepts of salvation in the light of their new political and theological situation. They needed carefully to work out the underlying Semitic meaning of Paul's writings. Each political and religious faction had their own stake in what definitions would come to be accepted and what salvation would come to mean. Needless to say, in the 1640s, Hobbes took advantage of the intellectual debate in which a new doctrinal context was being worked out to make scripture apprehensible in the context of new political and religious situations.[45]

This only serves to show how important the current discussion is and how important it is that we make sense of how Hobbes presented his own ideas about salvation. He explains that scripture uses the word "salvation" to mean the "joys of

life." To qualify this phrase, he further explains, "To be saved, is to be secured, either respectively, against speciall Evills, or absolutely against all Evill, comprehending Want, Sicknesse, and Death it self" (xxxviii, 245). God, having made humanity immortal and not subject to corruption, fell from this state of happiness because of the sin of Adam. Hobbes explicitly states that "to be *saved* from Sin, is to be saved from all the Evill, and Calamities that Sinne hath brought upon us" (xxxviii, 245), and that the "discharge of sin" is also the emancipation from the horrors of death and misery. Similarly, because Jesus brings "salvation absolute" for the faithful, he is called Savior. Here, Hobbes presents the meaning and parameters of salvation, leaving no room for discussion about who is the savior, who is being saved, and from what they need saving.

In this same passage where he presents his interpretation of salvation, Hobbes goes into a detailed interpretation of five particular verses from Isaiah 33 to make a distinction between 'particular salvation' and 'general salvation' (xxxviii, 245-47). Hobbes explains that 'particular salvation' is the salvation that was available for Israel at one time. Having God as its sovereign, Israel's salvation was both political and theological. Hobbes interestingly says that this kind of salvation needs no further discussion since there is "neither difficulty, nor interest" enough "to corrupt the interpretation of texts of that kind." 'General salvation' is, however, more difficult. It is a 'salvation absolute' that will include the Gentiles; will be located on earth in Jerusalem; will have God as king; and will be where there is no sickness. This is only to be realized "at the coming again of Christ," "after the day of judgment," and in the

"WORLD TO COME" (xxxviii, 246-8). Thus, we find that for Hobbes Christian salvation, to which general salvation refers, still considers God as the savior and the Christians as the saved, but the act of saving is an eschatological event only to be realized in a future world far removed from the present realities of life.

However, the political ramifications of each kind of salvation must be considered. While a more active form of salvation with real political implications was available in the form of 'particular salvation' for the people of Israel, it is not presently available in the current world. Similarly, general salvation is available for faithful Christians, but it has been relegated to a future realm and has no direct political implications for the present situation. What then of those who have no particular salvation here and now? Do they have a need to be saved? Who or what can do it? In fact, for one who does not believe in life after death, a political order that reflects this theological perspective of salvation may be welcomed since political decisions will be expected to rest on something other than divine intervention.

However, with the belief in future, general, and absolute salvation come real and important indirect political implications that must be considered. At the time of Thomas Hobbes the people of England had not yet forgotten the execution of Sir Thomas More over a century earlier. More had been publicly executed for treason because he refused to recognize King Henry VIII as the Supreme Head of the Church of England. He could have simply spoken aloud what he did not believe in his heart, yet he did not. Instead, he preferred to die rather than declare that the political sovereign of England held the highest office in religious matters and therefore could

make his own church. It is not hard to believe that instances like this were on Hobbes's mind when he speaks about the theological-political problems that arise out of the confusion about salvation. These problems also demonstrate the tension between one's present salvation and one's future salvation.

> The maintenance of Civill Society, depending on Justice; and Justice on the power of Life and Death, and other lesse Rewards and Punishments, residing in them that have the Soveraignty of the Common-wealth; It is impossible a Common-wealth should stand, where any other than the Soveraign, hath a power of giving greater rewards than Life; and of inflicting greater punishments than Death. Now seeing *Eternall life* is a greater reward, than the *life present*; and *Eternall torment* a greater punishment than the *death of Nature*; It is a thing worthy to be well considered, of all men that desire (by obeying Authority) to avoid the calamities of Confusion, and Civill war, what is meant in holy Scripture, by *Life Eternall*, and *Torment Eternall*; and for what offences, against whom committed, men are to be *Eternally tormented*; and for what actions, they are to obtain *Eternall life*. (xxxviii, 238)

Here, Hobbes is explicit about the competition between political and religious authority. He declares that when anyone other than the sovereign of the commonwealth has the power to give any "greater rewards than life" or to inflict any "greater punishment than death" then it is impossible for a commonwealth to stand. The reasoning is clear. Obedience is related to punishment and salvation. When there is a competition of authority, the victor is simply the one who threatens the greatest punishment and offers the greatest salvation. As is the case with Sir Thomas More,

individuals are often willing to risk a salvation that has been politically provided for the sake of securing eternal salvation. In other words, obligation and authority are derivatives of the sovereign's ability to provide salvation. Recognizing that salvation is a central theme in *Leviathan*—or, as I would suggest, *the* central theme—Hobbes's description of what salvation means should be compared with the whole of his own narrative and theory about the situation in which people find themselves and what can be done about it.

The Narrative and Theory of *Leviathan*

In terms of the narrative structure of *Leviathan,* individuals begin in a state of nature filled with chaos and war. It is the ultimate nightmare. The odious thirteenth chapter of *Leviathan* is filled with descriptions of this state where every individual is at war with every other. The description of this state—like the monstrous name Hobbes gives to the entire work, not to mention its reputation—arouses fear and anxiety and makes the reader ever more ready to hear Hobbes's solution. Yet, out of this place of desert, death, and destruction, Hobbes shows us how reason leads individuals to covenant with each other and to establish a political system of peace, safe from the natural state of violence. Salvation comes through the establishing of the leviathan, and individuals no longer need to be in fear of death—for they have gone from dark to light, crossed the impassible sea, and arrived at a land of peace, security, and prosperity. The civil system itself, guided by the principles of reason, stands as the actor that has brought salvation for those who need to be saved. Only

one thing remains for this civil instituted salvation to be Hobbes's salvation absolute: it is temporal and not eternal.

However, Hobbes's salvation narrative is not historical. It is logical. The theoretical aim of *Leviathan* is to develop a system of "Theoremes of Morall doctrine" that teaches "both how to govern, and how to obey," and has been "sufficiently or probably proved," so that, when it is turned into practice, it will bring real salvation with perpetual peace (xxxi, 193). It is not aimed at protecting historical institutions. In other words, the political engineer that seeks lasting peace must base the system on a method of *proven* certainty rather than historical accounts that are not always trustworthy.

To lay the foundation for this, Hobbes explains that there are two kinds of knowledge: the knowledge of facts and the knowledge of consequences. History is the knowledge of facts and is considered by Hobbes to be absolute knowledge. This is because history is formed through experiences that have already occurred, leaving a past that provides an open fixed collection of facts that are readily accessible for observation. Science, on the other hand, which is the knowledge of consequences, is conditional because one cannot know with certainty what future events will occur (ix, 40; cf. v). One can only predict. The more accurate the prediction, the more prudent will be one's choices (iii, 10-11).

In other words, history provides facts for assessment, which allow for the evaluation of past choices based on the resulting consequences and suggests what future choices will bring about similar consequences. The more experience one has

the more accuracy one will expect from his or her predictions and the less failure will occur. Those with the most experience are able to make predictions about the future with the greatest accuracy and therefore have the best chance of guessing what good and evil may come. One with the most experience has the best chances of predicting rightly and therefore is able to provide the best counsel (vii, 29). When an event happens according to prediction, this is called prudence (v, 21). However, this is only conditional knowledge; science based on history is merely prediction; all expectations are mere presumptions. Real foresight is providence which only belongs to God (iii, 10).

Here again is that competition of authority which is also at the heart of the theoretical problem. If one is to engineer a proven perpetual means of security, free from the dangerous state of all against all, it must rest on more than mere prediction. Direct access to God through a prophet, then, presents an important theoretical and practical consideration. That is, prophetic declarations are assumed to provide more certainty than prudence because "foresight of things to come, which is Providence, belongs onely to him by whose will they are to come [in other words, God]. From him onely, and supernaturally, proceeds Prophecy" (iii, 10).

If this is accepted, then, when experience causes a prudent individual to view the prophet's declarations with skepticism, the prophetic prescriptions about the order of political life will always win out. There are two important reasons for this. First, if God is omniscient, then true prophetic knowledge provided directly from God is direct information about real future events. Second, if God is omnipotent and is able

to supply the greatest rewards and punishments, then disobedience to God's directions declared through the prophet is the most dangerous of all choices. The skeptic then has two tasks: 1) he or she must show the prophet to be a phony, and 2) he or she must rely on a wisdom that is even more certain than prudence. If salvation is the central theme of *Leviathan*, the theoretical aim may be summarized in that it seeks to present a political theory of salvation that accomplishes both tasks while at the same time dealing with the obligation issue.

Prophecy, Prudence, and the Primacy of Reason

It must be shown how Hobbes deals with prophecy first because, as long as divinely inspired foreknowledge and direction exists, any other kind of guidance for political direction will always be second-class and less than divine. Therefore, before explaining how to arrive at a certainty to which a political theory that will bring about lasting salvation will be rooted, we must first see how Hobbes handles the problem of prophetic political direction. Hobbes explains that prophecy is not an art or a vocation. Prophets are God's spokespersons who pronounce the words of God. What is important is the recognition that there are also imposters. God speaks to prophets immediately in a way that makes them understand the divine will. Prophecy supposes a vision, a dream, or some other special and admired gift of direct mediation of the will of God. What is important for Hobbes's theory is that the one who prophesies proposes to be speaking for God and therefore "pretends to govern." For this reason,

Hobbes explains, God has gifted humanity with the ability to use reason to distinguish between the true and false prophets (xxxvi, 225-32).

Anyone claiming the gift of prophecy, therefore, has two criteria that must be satisfied: they must perform miracles and they must not contradict the established authority (xxxii, 197). This is because, in the context of the current discussion, prophets are those who seek to provide political direction, and miracles are meant to serve as indicators of true prophecy. Prophets are representatives of God's sovereignty, and miracles are signs that support one's divinely established authority as God's representative. Without the use of reason to discern the truth of their teachings and miracles to confirm their calling, people "must suffer themselves to bee lead by some strange Prince; or by some of their fellow subjects, that can bewitch them… and by this means…reduce all Order, Government, and Society, to the first Chaos of Violence, and Civill warre" (xxxvii, 232).

Hobbes argues that, in the present age, the role of the prophet is emptied of all power, because "Miracles now cease" (xxxii, 198). This period, which is the time between the ascension and the resurrection, is a time of regeneration. It is not a time of God's "Reigning" (xlii, 269). Having relegated the general salvation to a future period, Hobbes claims the "kingdom of Christ is not to begin till the general resurrection." During this current period of regeneration, the kingdom of God is not properly called a kingdom, and therefore does not justify disobedience to the magistrate (xli, 262-4). It is important to note the special saving role that a kingdom maintains for Hobbes's theory. The "kingdom" of God cannot presently be called a

kingdom because a kingdom is an "estate ordained by men for their perpetuall security against enemies, and want" (xxxviii, 246). That is, miracles now cease, prophets are powerless, salvation is not available until a later time, and God's sovereignty is not in competition for authority. Thus, given the character of the state of nature, humanity is in need of being saved presently, and that salvation must come from another source.

As we see, in the discussion about salvation in *Leviathan,* Hobbes has separated history into three parts in order to answer the theological question about Christian salvation. This is exactly the theological shortcut around the orthodox understanding about Christian salvation against which McGrath warned, as I earlier suggested. As Hobbes explains, "There are three worlds mentioned in Scripture, the Old World, the Present World, and the WORLD TO COME" (xxxviii, 247). The divinely directed salvation, for Hobbes, is a general, absolute, and eternal salvation, but it has no real direct implication for the immediate political order.

In the time of regeneration, therefore, where miracles cease, all prophecy is false. By eliminating prophecy, Hobbes had accomplished a major part of the theoretical aim of *Leviathan*, which was to develop a salvific political system based on certainty. This means that, at least during this time, prudence remains as an alternative to prophecy and a guide to finding safety and securing peace. This would, however, only serve to provide further support to historically rooted institutions that could claim they were based on historically proven principles. Therefore, another of

the theoretical tasks of *Leviathan* is to show what problems still remain with prudence after which he suggested that there can be an even better form of wisdom.

Hobbes's introduction to *Thucydides* clearly shows how he sees the value of the historical narrative as a teacher of precepts and laying the groundwork for prudence. He explains that by studying history, one may "draw out lessons to himself, and of himself be able to trace the drifts and counsels of the actors to their seat"[46] That is, a reader of historical narratives can see which goals lead to actions and guidance that bring about success, and which ones bring about failures. It is best when one learns and obeys precepts for their own sake. Hobbes understands, however, that one does not usually follow precepts for their own sake but for the consequences that result. In other words, the study of historical facts presented in narrative form provides one with the ability to learn about consequences. The narrative of history is the presentation of facts in such a way that makes science and the learning of prudence possible.

Why, then, would the learning of prudence be problematic? Because obtaining certainty through an accurate account of past events proves impossible. Individuals can only know historical facts in two ways, through personal experience or vicariously. In either case, it is only possible to know things about the past using memory, which Hobbes understands to be the decay that occurs in one's imagination of events (ii, 5-6). Either one's own recollection of experience must be trusted, or one must trust the memory and retelling of others' experiences. Both are fallible. Experience is nothing more than collections of many memories of many events.

There is, however, a third option. Just as the knowledge of consequences can lead us to make presumptions about future events, presumptions can be made about the past. When a person sees the aims that have led one state to fall into a war, one may see the ruins of another state and make the educated guess that both have fallen from similar causes (iii, 11). So while knowledge of fact is absolute knowledge, obtaining absolute knowledge about the past with certainty is problematic; the best one can do is depend on memory, presumption, or testimony.

If one comes to believe the testimonies of history from others, it is an expression of faith and authority in those people. In this case, certainty rests in the fidelity of another's witness. As Hobbes puts it, if the histories of Alexander or Caesar are considered unbelievable, it is only the historian who has cause to be offended. In this way, faith and history are intimately connected. What is believed for no other reason than someone has told it, Hobbes explains, is rooted in one's faith in the historian. Stated another way, what one believes about the "facts" of history may not be true, but they may be deemed acceptable because those in authority have determined them to be so (vii, 31-32; cf. v, 22).

Similarly, the narrative of history can be dangerous if one considers the problems that come with memory, which is decaying imagination. In other words, memory is not trustworthy, whether it is one's own memory or the memory of others. The danger comes in what Hobbes calls compound imaginations, which are fictions of the mind. He explains that, just as one imagines a centaur because one had the memory of a man and a horse, one can compound memories of oneself with others

and assume oneself to be like Hercules or Alexander (ii, 5-6). In this way, humans can fancy things they never saw, creating false idols and false histories (xlv, 358-9).

Thus, while history is beneficial because it serves as an instructor for prudence, historical knowledge, while absolute, remains uncertain. Because the narrative of history is a teacher, the historian has an immense responsibility to lay out the narrative faithfully because it will serve in teaching precepts. That is, the one who has the power to retell the story has the power of instruction. This is especially true if one considers how Hobbes viewed the influence of public authority: "Common-people's minds [unless they have already been scribbled over by other doctrines or teachings] are like clean paper, fit to receive whatsoever by Publique Authority shall be imprinted in them" (xxx, 175-179). Hobbes sees that "Common-people's minds," then, can often be tainted with the fancies and false histories that have been given to them by those in power. This makes it all the more difficult for them to receive teachings of any true moral precepts that will lead to salvation and establishing real peace, even if these precepts could be known with certainty. The solution, for Hobbes, then was to combat this tendency by laying out these precepts, the laws of nature, in a way that they can be received, even by common people, by wrapping the laws in the form of a pseudo-historical narrative. That is, if there are moral precepts that are known with certainty, they must be presented in relation to the success of obedience and the failures from disobedience and then placed in the hands of the civil sovereign who can turn their teaching into practice (cf. xxxi, 193). To eliminate the problems that come with obtaining certainty from historical knowledge or prophecy,

Hobbes's solution, then, is not just to lay out any narrative account based on the retelling of religious truths or historical events. Instead, he will develop precepts that are grounded in the certainty of reason and method and then present them in the fashion of a salvation narrative.

With prophecy out of the question, the primacy of reason in *Leviathan* is evident in how Hobbes compares reason to history and prudence. History, the knowledge of facts, is based on the senses and memory with which all human beings are born. With experience, one is able to make predictions and gain prudence. Reason, different from both of these, is "attained by industry" (v, 21). That is, reason is gained through the hard work of correctly naming things and establishing the proper connections between facts and definitions to arrive at propositions which are certain.

Noticing the relationship between reason and science is deeply important for understanding Hobbes's method. Simply using scientific methodology can still lead one down paths of reckoning that may be either certain or uncertain, depending on where one begins; reason, however, is grounded in certainty. As Hobbes explains, "The Use and End of reason, is not the finding of the summe, and truth of one, or a few consequences, remote from the first definitions, and settled significations of names; but to begin at these; and proceed from one consequence to another. For there can be no certainty of the last Conclusion, without a certainty of all those Affirmations and Negations, on which it was grounded, and inferred" (v, 19). While science can be certain or uncertain, reason is based on the certainty of both

foundations and method. Any science, to show it is grounded in reason, must then be based on accepted definitions, and each of the connected consequences between facts must be demonstrable. Therefore, while simple science is the knowledge of consequences and is conditional, when aided by reason—that is, when grounded in certainty—Hobbes calls it "infallible science." In this way, Hobbes separates wisdom into prudence and sapience.

> As, much Experience, is *Prudence*; so, is much Science, *Sapience*. For though wee usually have one name of Wisedome for them both; yet the Latines did always distinguish between *Prudentia* and *Sapientia*, ascribing the former to Experience, the later to Science...both [are] usefull; but the later infallible. But they that trusting onely to the authority of books, follow the blind blindly, are like him that trusting to the false rules of the master of fence, ventures præsumptuously upon an adversary, that either kills, or disgraces him. (v, 22)

While prudence based on experience may be enough for private affairs, science based on history is not enough for political theory. What is needed is sapience, which is the certainty that can only be found by using a method of infallible science rooted in reason (v, 21-22).

Hobbes later echoes this argument about the relationship between reason and prudence. In his discussion about what makes a good counselor, he explains that, when a counselor is called on to do something where there are "Infallible rules, (as in Engines, and Edifices, the rules of Geometry,) all the experience of the world cannot equal his Counsell...And when there is no such Rule, he that hath most experience in

that particular kind of businesses, has therein the best Judgment, and is the best Counsellour" (xxv, 135).

Hobbes's aim, however, is not just the proper modes or methods of acquiring knowledge; it is to establish, both theoretically and practically, salvation. He seeks to engineer a political system that will bring about a certain and lasting peace. He must create a political system using a method that trumps all other possible ways of "knowing" and authorities about what is known. At the root of the warring for power and vying for political control and obligations is this exact struggle, to prove that one authority and system of knowledge stands above the others. Whichever salvific system proves itself to be based on the most authoritative knowledge will be the one people will be obligated to obey.

Hobbes agrees with traditional political and theological philosophies that there can be a right ordering for society. Yet, like Descartes, Hobbes aimed to determine absolutes by arriving at first principles through the certainty of knowledge found within oneself. This means that truths about human nature cannot be forced from the outside. Humans cannot be seen as social animals; political leaders cannot appeal to a divine right to justify their rule. This is why Hobbes utilizes a scientific methodology by adhering to this strict formula of reason and certainty. Unlike Descartes, who chose to work out a method *a priori*, Hobbes chose to use the resolutive-compositive method practiced by Harvey and Galilei, which originated in the University of Padua. To find true knowledge of something, one resolves it into its most basic parts and then builds it back together again into a complex whole. Once several factors in a

complex situation have been identified and defined, one is then able to idealize the situation and imagine the operation of some factors in isolation from all others. This process, when applied to nature, should allow us to arrive at the fundamental causes and first principles of any natural phenomenon.[47] This will provide what Hobbes needs to develop a sapient-ordering of society that proves more certain than the wisdom of prudence or foresight from prophecy.

That Hobbes used this method is most apparent in the preface to *De Cive*:

> For as in a watch, or some such small engine, the matter, figure, and motion of the wheels cannot well be known, except it be taken in sunder, and viewed in parts; so to make a more curious search into the rights of states, and duties of subjects, it is necessary, I say, not to take them insunder, but yet that they be so considered, as if they were dissolved.[48]

This method, then, seems to provide the framework for an intellectual discovery as well as the framework that pieces together the narrative form of salvation presented in *Leviathan.*

It is in this light that one should seek to understand Hobbes's state of nature. The state of nature in *Leviathan* is a thought experiment seeking to dissect society into individuals and simply ask the question, "What would life be like without the external obligations imposed on individuals from society?" The state of nature is a logical (not temporal) beginning point to construct intellectually a society based on what can be known with certainty—those things understood through introspection. As Pocock puts it, Hobbes seeks to liberate us from Plato's cave by teaching us to argue

for a right order of society by thinking logically rather than diachronically. That is, Hobbes constructs a system based on reasoning from premise to consequence rather than from historical occurrence to recurrence.[49] It is important, then, to notice that Hobbes does not argue about the correct ordering of society—meaning he did not consider the ideas of social contracts, obligation, representation, or sovereignty—by searching through the histories of ancient governments. Machiavelli had done this in his *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy*, which included a thorough retelling of the Polybian ideas about the most stable forms of government. Instead, Hobbes's argument for the correct order of society was based on a logical and philosophical development rather than a retelling of historical events. Thus, any evidence that could be found from history or religious traditions would be abandoned when engineering the order of society. This is especially important since Hobbes needs to construct a theory of representation that could stand up against the traditional arguments for the "divine right of kings" and the pure liberty of the people (as he notes in the Epistle Dedicatory).

With prophecy lacking and humanistic sapience more certain than prudence, thereby making method more trustworthy than revelation or history, the agenda of *Leviathan* is to replace historical and religious narratives with a scientific-methodological one. It is no longer acceptable to base the order of society on historical knowledge or divine appointment; only Hobbes's new science of politics will be acceptable.

Society Grounded in Certainty: Fear and the State of Nature

Hobbes's narrative is humanistic and scientific rather than divinely ordered from its very beginning. Hobbes is often, along with Machiavelli, considered a founder of modern political liberalism. This is, in part, because his theory argues that the existence of the political order must by justified, rather than assuming it to be a natural or divine creation. In this way, the certainty of reasoning and the concept of "rights" are together an integral pair in Hobbes's theory.

As Leo Strauss has pointed out, Hobbes held original views about humanity prior to his "distorting them" with scientific "explanations."[50] This means that Hobbes did not discover the basis and genesis of his theory of selfish human nature through using the scientific method but held this view from even before his discovery of the effectiveness of scientific explanation. Strauss argues that Hobbes had to choose between using traditional philosophy or modern science to express his views about human life. This only makes it all the more important that we notice how Hobbes uses resolution to build a heuristic model that answers the question stated above, about what life would be like for humans if the external obligations imposed on individuals from society were removed.

No one will deny that the fear of death is a powerful motivation for action. In fact, for the political theorist who seeks to turn theory into action (v, 22) and place fear at the core of a political theory, one may make great strides at turning ideas into reality.[51] That the primacy of fear is vital to the doctrine of *Leviathan* can be seen in

how Hobbes understands the role of reason. It is reason, the infallible science, which suggests that a covenant be made among individuals that can save men from a state of fear and violence and lead them into a state of peace and security (xiii, 63). Needless to say, both sapience and prudence may provide the means to deal with circumstantial fear. While prudence, which is wisdom based on experience, may be able to prevent disaster temporarily or work to relieve a current problem, only sapience, which is infallible wisdom, can handle fear as the inherent problem of the human condition. In other words, only the certainty of sapient human reason can result in the establishment of a system of security and peace.

In one of the most telling paragraphs in the entirety of *Leviathan,* Hobbes explains that wisdom comes by "reading men."[52] It is by understanding human nature that Hobbes begins, telling us that acquiring wisdom by "reading men" will be necessary in order to understand the need for the development of his political theory. This apparent reference to the inscription of the Temple of Delphi—knowing thyself—must be seen, then, in contrast with other sources of wisdom, in other words, the "reading" of books of religion or history. From the philosophical and theological questions posed by Hobbes's work, it is imperative that we notice that "reading men" is set as the grounding for sapient wisdom, which we have seen Hobbes has placed in contrast to prudential wisdom (gained through experience or the study of history) and prophecy (gained through divine revelation).

This grounding also stands in contrast to the traditional "reading" of scripture, which is religious history and in contrast to the practice of merely "reading"

philosophy. Instead of reading these sources to gain truth, one must discover truths about human nature from what can be "read" in one's own self. Then, whatever sapient wisdom can be gained, can then be used to clarify, or even invalidate, the "wisdom" that is gained from other source. One should notice how the last paragraph of the "Introduction" to *Leviathan* shows how Hobbes expects his own work to be read. It is not the reading of the "works" of scripture of philosophy that is the problem; it is their authority. Thus we see, the only authority one can truly rely on for sapient wisdom, the only place to find the grounding for certainty, is in "reading thyself."

For Hobbes, it seems that reading oneself provides the self-evident proof of that innate fear of death from which humanity ultimately seeks to escape. That is, Hobbes conceives of a state of nature which is a state of ultimate fear, especially fear of death, where each individual stands vulnerable at the hands of his equals (xiii). Yet, Hobbes's natural state is not a state in which humanity is assumed to have ever actually lived (xiii, 63). Instead, it is only justified in that individuals who have read themselves would verify it through their own experiences. It is an axiom, self-evident to all who will consider it.

In this natural state, humanity is lonely and at the mercy of the harsh realities of the fragility of life. It is a state where the human being is alone in the world, subjected to the elements, with nothing for which to give thanks and nothing for which to hope. If it can be called a divine creation in any sense, it is a creation indifferent to the plight of human poverty and a creation that leaves humanity

powerless. Or worse than indifferent, this creation is actually inimical to human preservation and prosperity. In this natural state, a Creator cannot be worshiped simply for being the Creator, "but from his *Irresistable Power*" (xxxi, 187).

Rather than serving as an effective argument for the justification of a natural state, when put side by side with the belief in a benevolent God worthy of worship, Hobbes's construction of a natural state of solitary and broken humanity appears absurd—that is, if one assumes that creation is the work of a benevolent God. Simply put, the logical conclusion is that one or both of these positions are false. The first, and perhaps most solid argument may be that God does not exist or at least is not worthy of worship. This may be, in fact, a major point in Hobbes's argument. As Leo Strauss points out, if in the state of nature each individual is at the mercy of the harsh and indifferent forces of the universe, then there is no reason to be grateful to its "First Cause." If the individual happens to come into good fortune, it will be considered an act of human industry rather than divine benevolence. The conclusion being that, as far as the question about God's saving power, there are two possibilities: 1) God cannot intervene to affect human lives through his own power and will—God is not omnipotent and hence cannot change the state of nature into something good for evnen his chosen people; or 2) God may be omnipotent but he is not good—he is not benevolent. Strauss goes further, "Since man is at the mercy of a fate utterly unconcerned as to his weal or woe, a fate which one may call God's irresistible power, because man experiences only force, and not kindness from the overwhelming power of the universe, he has no choice but to help himself."[53] In other

words, it is inconceivable that human beings in Hobbes's hellish state of nature would consider the Creator of their situation worthy of worship.[54] Thus, Hobbes's theory begins with a deep understanding of human nature, understood through human reasoning, and it is up to humanity to do something about its horrible but natural predicament.

If we compare the state of nature—which is a state of fear—to what Hobbes also says about memory, imagination, and beliefs, we find that fear provides more than the grounding that leads individuals to reason their way to salvation. In fact, Hobbes's definition of religion is that it is rooted in fear. "*Feare* of power invisible, feigned by the mind, or imagined from tales publiquely allowed [is called] RELIGION; not allowed, SUPERSTITION. And when the power imagined, is truly such as we imagine, TRUE RELIGION" (vi, 26). Those who are curious and love to know the causes of things and "make any profound enquiry into natural causes" will arrive at the conclusion that there is a first cause, which is God (xi, 51). Therefore, in a state of natural fear and turmoil, this first cause is the cause of fear.

What might this "true religion" be, if not a religion based on the dreaded state Hobbes imagines to be the returning to the ultimate state of fear and death that he proposed to be the state of nature? As Edwin Curley argues, for Hobbes, curiosity in searching for first causes is the root of monotheism, while fear of invisible powers is the origin of polytheism.[55] What this discussion has shown, however, is that even Hobbes's "First Cause" puts humanity in a fearful state from which it is in desperate need of salvation.

Asking the question what individuals would look like in a state of nature, apart from the safety and benefits of social order, leads to fear and deprivation. If God is worthy of worship, then might human beings be naturally suited for society? In other words, a third possibility that one might consider is that Hobbes has done a severe injustice by removing humanity from its natural social environment, showing what it *would* look like *if* humans were individuals and removed from the benefits of community. It is clear, however, that Hobbes's *did* believe that human beings were inherently individuals. His theory of representation clearly opposes the divine right of kings. Similarly, he gives six reasons why humans are not political animals as Aristotle presents them.[56]

There is yet something deeper here one may miss in the argument between those who claim to understand Hobbes and his opponents. What the nature and character of human beings *would be*, had they been created as lonely individuals, thus making life hellishly unlivable and God unworthy of worship, only serve to show that the state of nature is not a state to which human beings belong.[57] Politically, it is an argument that provides the fundamental purpose underlying the kinds of social structures which safeguard against falling into such a state of chaos and war. Morally, it is an argument supporting the kind of relationships humans must have with each other to ensure safety and appropriately respond to the innate fear of violence and death that appear to govern the human soul. But theologically, it is an ultimatum. If human beings were created in a state of nature, as Hobbes's presents, and can create a society that safeguards against the calamities of human nature, then God is no longer

needed, neither in the state of nature nor in the artificial state Hobbes has engineered. Perhaps more importantly, it suggests that humans are not only socially broken but are left to live in anguish and fear without the guidance of reason. Hobbes's theory is to provide the certainty with which a state of security can exist and through which humanity can be saved from violence and fear. Thus, sapience, which is humanistic science rooted in the self-evident truth of human nature, not only calls one to begin reasoning from an imagined state of hell on earth but methodically paves the way for an entirely human instituted salvation from that state.

Salvation Secured through Obligation

The next stage in the salvation narrative of *Leviathan* is that individuals move from the state of fear and war to the state of security by covenanting with each other. Through this covenant is established the "leviathan" that stands as a system of sovereignty which has been given the right to rule by the individuals of the commonwealth having laid down their own rights in order to escape the state of nature. Hobbes calls his leviathan the "*Mortall God*" (xvii, 87).

In essence, Hobbes's state is able to come in and use reason to solve the problems of human nature. It has been conceived of by Hobbes through a process of calculation and is itself presented to be created in reality through a process of calculation. This mortal god, through the process of reason, has transformed the animals that irrational and selfish individuals would present themselves to be into human beings. Thus, it is through leviathan that peace comes. Peace is not something

that has been given by a divine act or something that could be found in nature. Rather, this peace is something that came about only through human action, the formation of a social contract. Thus, this mortal god transforms animals into human beings. This happens in distinct stages. First, humanity is irrational and chaotic (merely animals). Next, individuals are led by reason to join in a covenant with each other. Finally, a government is established with laws and order that brings salvation by making individuals obligated to live in peace with one another. While other political theories have considered civil order as the protector of the peace, Hobbes's mortal god is the creator of it.[58]

Only after Hobbes has established the narrative of salvation in *Leviathan*, its transformative and creative messianic role, does he present a system of obligation and representation. That is, there is a necessary relationship between salvation and obedience. Prior to the initiation of the covenant of every individual with every other, all "laws" are merely precepts and dispositions. It is only after the commonwealth is established that precepts of reason can be understood as laws (xxvi, 141). Stated another way, humanity is naturally predisposed to peace because it is fearful and, in the state of nature, desperate for salvation. Once salvation is on the horizon, individuals will make every endeavor to secure it by keeping laws and agreements. Law is obligation, (xiv, 67) and individuals are obligated to obey the law because they have made a covenant in the expectation that it will save them. They have given up their individual roles as the protectors and saviors of themselves (exchanged their

natural rights) to leviathan, who will be their savior and provide the safety and security they desperately seek.

Obligation qua Salvation. It is important to notice that individuals are obligated to obey the laws because salvation has come and, through their obedience, is able to be secured. As Hobbes explains, the bonds of the covenant are not easily broken; it is not due to the strength of the words of the covenant, because words are easily broken, but because the fear of evil and consequences that will result from disobedience (xiv, 65). These are not simply the evil consequences due to the punishments and rewards that are controlled by the sovereign. It is not obedience *qua* obedience, nor is it obedience *qua* fear of punishment. Obligation to the covenant comes from the knowledge that one has received salvation. If obligation is related to fear, it is the fear of returning to the hell from whence humanity began. As Carl Schmitt puts it, if Hobbes's theory simply brought people from the fear and violence of the state of nature into a fear and violence of sovereign, then this theory would be absurd.[59] The obligation presented in the state theory of *Leviathan* is obedience *qua* salvation.

Representation* qua *Salvation. It is at this point that Hobbes presents his theory of representation. As it has already been pointed out, one of the main problems Hobbes is dealing with is the competition of authority. Therefore, it must be clear who holds the ultimate authority; in other words, who is the real representative of salvation? Who is the real savior? If Hobbes thought the sectarian conflict that had arisen among the various competing religious leaders who claimed divine authority to

lead the people had been the root of the English civil war, then the solution must be to show which claimant to authority was the securer of real salvation.

As was mentioned earlier, just relegating Christian salvation to a future period and claiming that God's saving power is held off until a future "world to come" is not enough to deter political chaos. As the example of Sir Thomas More showed, the belief in a future salvation can be all the more reason for someone to deny his or her obligation to the civil sovereign. This is how Hobbes's theory of representation serves the overall theoretical aims.

If the clergy claim a separate authority from the civil sovereign, then the possibility arises for conflict. Preachers and teachers of all kinds may be capable of stirring up trouble and inciting violence by laying claim to people's loyalty to something beyond the immediate political reality. Individuals like Sir Thomas More are able to claim allegiance to a spiritual authority and, even to death, deny the final authority of the civil sovereign. Therefore, what Hobbes must ultimately do is undermine the authority of the clergy and show that the civil sovereign is the true representative of effectual salvation, both political *and* theological. One method for doing this has already been discussed, insofar as Hobbes has argued, that the current time is the period of regeneration when God does not speak. Therefore, we cannot know God's will. For Hobbes, that does not mean that God's authority cannot be represented.

In the sixteenth chapter of *Leviathan*, Hobbes puts forth his theory of representation (xvi, 80-83). Individuals that speak or act for themselves are "natural

persons." Hobbes makes the distinction between "natural persons" and "artificial persons." Artificial persons are persons or things that are represented by the words and the actions of another (xvi, 80). Thus, Hobbes lists several things that are represented by "artificial persons," which are not natural persons but can nevertheless be personated. In listing "artificial persons," Hobbes discusses inanimate objects, irrational humans, false gods, the true God, and the multitude.

It appears that the most important artificial person Hobbes wants to present is sovereignty. The representative of the sovereign, however, is actually presented last in Hobbes's list. As individuals, people may be considered the authors of their own actions. But in considering a collective people, Hobbes's discussion about representation is much more interesting.

> A Multitude of men, are made *One* Person, when they are by one man, or one Person, Represented; so that it be done with the consent of every one of that Multitude in particular. For it is the *Unity* of the Representer, not the *Unity* of the Represented, that maketh the Person *One*. And it is the Representer that beareth the Person, and but one Person: And *Unity*, cannot otherwise be understood in Multitude. (xvi, 82)

What exactly is meant when one talks about the will or the actions of "the people?" The will or actions of a multitude, for Hobbes, can only be considered when the individuals come together and become a unity. This unity, however, is not the unity of the people who are "the Represented," but "it is the *Unity* of the Representer" (the sovereign). This happens when they give the authority to the representative to act on their behalf. Thus, "the people", for Hobbes, can only will or act when it is done

through a representative. That is, "the people" is but one person—since it is the representative (either the sovereign or the prearranged decision-making mechanism, such as a majority in an assembly) that bears the personhood of the people. As interesting as this theory of representation is, what is most telling, however, is the progression of the list of artificial persons as Hobbes presents them.

It begins very directly. Hobbes discusses that inanimate objects such as churches, hospitals, and bridges cannot be authors of actions, but someone can be given the authority to act on their behalf to maintain them, such as their owners or governors. Those who act on the behalf of inanimate objects are said to personate them and thus be their representatives. It is similarly straightforward that next Hobbes discusses the animate but irrational: children, fools, and those who are mad. (While Hobbes does discuss whether animals can be personated, surely they would fit here in the list as animate but irrational beings.) Because these individuals cannot be expected to use reason, they are not considered to be the authors of their own actions—and can therefore be personated. What is interesting is that next Hobbes considers false gods. Again, false gods cannot be considered the authors of their own actions (assumedly because they cannot act), and thus can be personated.

We should notice that before Hobbes discusses the representative of the commonwealth, it is rather clever that Hobbes includes the true God in this list of things that can be artificially personated. Bridges, children, and idols must be artificially personated because they either cannot act or do not have the means of being rationally responsible for their actions. They cannot, therefore, be considered

the author of their actions. Hobbes makes it clear, however, that they cannot be personated until after the covenant has been made and a civil state comes into existence. That the "True God" fits on this list only highlights the fact that Hobbes sees God as absent and inactive. Therefore, God can be personated and may have a representative but does not intervene directly in political situations. But in what way and by whom can God be personated?

Hobbes explains that the word for church in scripture was Ecclesia. He explains that this was the same word that was used to refer to the Grecian commonwealths. In this sense, the only way that the church can have commands, wills, orders, or actions is when it is taken for one person, following Hobbes's understanding of representation. As he explains, "I define a CHURCH to be, *A company of men professing Christian Religion, united in the person of one Soveraign; at whose command they ought to assemble, and without whose authority they ought not to assemble*" (xxxix, 247b-248b).[60]

In the same vein, Hobbes explains that a grave mistake is often made when people confuse the spiritual and temporal authority.

> *Temporall* and *Spirituall* Government, are but two words brought into the world, to make men see double, and mistake their *Lawfull Soveraign*. It is true, that the bodies of the faithfull, after the Resurrection shall be not onely Spirituall, but Eternall; but in this life they are grosse, and corruptible. There is therefore no other Government in this life, neither of State, nor Religion, but Temporall; nor teaching of any doctrine, lawfull to any Subject, which the Governour both of the State, and of

> the Religion, forbiddeth to be taught: And that Governor must be one; or else there must needs follow Faction, and Civil war in the Common-wealth, between the *Church* and *State*; between Spiritualists, and Temporalists; between the *Sword Of Justice*, and the *Shield Of Faith*; and (which is more) in every Christian mans own brest, between the *Christian*, and the *Man*. (xxxix, 248b)

Again, this serves to show that peace and security in political life depend on leviathan. The only standard of justice available is determined by the governor. The only authority is a united authority, where "both of the State, and of the Religion," are together, and the "Governor must be one." The warning, Hobbes explains, could be simply restated in that, by arguing that one is obligated to follow God's authority at the expense of the sovereign, one has chosen to forsake the salvation that has been provided through the leviathan without recognizing that the civil sovereign must also hold the authority as the representative of the church, and therefore God, if the commonwealth is to remain secure.

In this way, obedience to God and the civil sovereign are not inconsistent, whether the sovereign is a Christian or an infidel (xliii, 330-31). While Hobbes's theory of salvation may seem minimalistic, he explains that there are two important things that are necessary for salvation, "*Faith in Christ, and Obedience to Laws*." Obedience to the laws would be enough for salvation, at least in terms of particular salvation through civil security and peace, yet "*Remission* of sins for the time past" is needed for general salvation which now simply has no impact on the current life whatsoever (xliii, 322).

Laviathanian Narrative Logic and Order. Thus far, we have seen that the narrative of *Leviathan* presents a story of salvation in the following stages: 1) the state of nature is chaos and war; 2) reason leads individuals to join in covenant with each other, establishing a sovereign and bringing salvation; 3) the individuals in the commonwealth are obligated to uphold the covenant and obey the laws of the commonwealth because they bring safety and security; 4) the sovereign represents the unity that is brought about through the covenant which extends to include both religious and political authority and unite them in one person.

If he is successfully to undermine the authority of the clergy yet present the sovereign as the representative of both the state and the church, Hobbes needs to show that the relationship between salvation and obligation follows the same order and logic in scripture as it does with the narrative presented by his theory. That is, the authority and obligation to obedience must come as a result of the establishment of the civil sovereignty and salvation from chaos and war. Therefore, it is essential to the narrative of *Leviathan* that Hobbes presents a full explanation of not only political but also religious salvation.

Hobbes's Political Salvation and Its Theological Competition

Before exploring Hobbes's discussion of the Hebrew narrative of salvation, it will be helpful to compare more fully Hobbes's position on political salvation with the traditional theological view of salvation. With the Leviathanian salvation narrative, political salvation requires that the civil sovereign be the highest source of

authority, the sole source of protection, and that the sovereign's establishment depends on a covenant made between each individual that ends the chaotic state of nature. A competing theological picture of salvation in the stories of Israel's history which Hobbes certainly understood, as has already been discussed, sees that God is the sole protector and that it is the covenant made with God that establishes God's sovereignty.

The political narrative shows that the sovereign must be the representative of the people and instituted by them, not God. Salvation, then, is rooted in a civil agreement that ensures safety and protection, without which there is no obligation. Obligation is simply to the sovereign. Obligation to God only exists if the religion that has been established by the sovereign so commands it. The biblical narrative, it will be shown, presents a fundamentally opposing picture of God's sovereignty. It is a picture that is, however, very similar to Hobbes's narrative of political salvation. It presents God as being worthy of obedience under the same reasoning Hobbes argues for political obligation. Similarly, scripture presents God's laws as obligatory, not because of God's irresistible power, but for the reason that Israel had made a covenant to obey God because God had provided the safety and security that brought about Israel's deliverance and salvation. Similarly, miracles were not used primarily to prove that a prophet was legitimate but to play a major role in bringing about the salvation of Israel. This will be shown by examining the exact same passages from the Hebrew narrative upon which Hobbes himself chooses to focus his attention: the exodus story and the Ten Commandments.

The Egyptian Revolution

It has already been discussed that Hobbes sees the current period as a period of regeneration where miracles and divine revelation to private individuals have ceased. Hobbes argues that scripture has taken the place of divine revelation in the current period (xxxii, 198). It is clear that this has not always been the case. If the Hebrew Scriptures are to be read and believed to have authority, miracles and divine revelation did play a significant role in the scriptural narrative of salvation. Where the first half of *Leviathan* draws on reason to construct a civil commonwealth, the second half draws insight from scripture to gain instruction for the ordering of Christian commonwealths. For this reason, Hobbes begins directly in the thirty-second chapter by discussing scripture and miracles.

To establish his understanding of the doctrine of miracles as presented in scripture, Hobbes discusses the warnings about false prophets and their seditious nature from the book of Deuteronomy.

> If one Prophet deceive another, what certainty is there of knowing the will of God, by other way than that of Reason? To which I answer out of the Holy Scripture, that there be two marks, by which together, not asunder, a true Prophet is to be known. One is the doing of miracles; the other is the not teaching any other Religion than that which is already established. Asunder (I say) neither of these is sufficient. (Deut. 13 v. 1,2,3,4,5) *If a Prophet rise amongst you, or a Dreamer of dreams, and shall pretend the doing of a miracle, and the miracle come to passe; if he say, Let us follow strange Gods, which thou hast not known, thou shalt not hearken to him, &c. But that*

> *Prophet and Dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he hath spoken to you to Revolt from the Lord your God.* In which words two things are to be observed, First, that God wil not have miracles alone serve for arguments, to approve the Prophets calling; but (as it is in the third verse) for an **experiment of the constancy of our adherence to himself.** For the works of the *Egyptian* Sorcerers, though not so great as those of *Moses*, yet were great miracles. Secondly, that how great soever the miracle be, yet if it tend to stir up revolt against the King, or him that governeth by the Kings authority, he that doth such miracle, is not to be considered otherwise than as sent to make triall of their allegiance. For these words, *revolt from the Lord your God*, are in this place equivalent to *revolt from your King*. For they had made God their King by pact at the foot of Mount *Sinai*; who ruled them by *Moses* only; for he only spake with God, and from time to time declared Gods Commandements to the people. (xxxii, 197 – italics in original, bold added for emphasis)

Clearly, Hobbes wants us to see that miracles are dangerous because they can stir up a revolt against the sovereign's authority. To solve this problem, as has already been explained, Hobbes's quote from Deuteronomy 13 is meant to argue that a prophet is known through doing miracles and adhering to the teaching of the already established religion. Similarly, Hobbes equates the phrase "*revolt from the Lord your God*" to "*revolt from your King*." This is at the core of how Hobbes seeks to reconcile faith and political power. For the biblical people of Israel, Hobbes supports this substitution with the evidence that Israel had made God their king at Mount Sinai. However, one should pay close attention to the example Hobbes specifically uses

about the use of miracles as a part of the competition between the Egyptian sorcerers and Moses from the salvation narrative presented in passages from Exodus.

First, it should be noted that Hobbes is either being intentionally deceptive or making some indirect suggestion with his example in claiming that prophets who use miracles to encourage sedition should not be trusted. He explicitly states that no matter "how great soever the miracle be, yet if it tend to stir up revolt against the King, or him that governeth by the King's authority, he that doth such miracle" is not to be considered a prophet of God, but sent to trial for sedition. Yet, Hobbes knows that the people of Israel—not yet having made the covenant with God at Mount Sinai until *after* they had left Egypt—were subjects of the sovereign of Egypt and that the miracles performed by the power of God through Moses were intended as explicit acts of sedition against the power of the Pharaoh in order to bring about their salvation. This is clear in the exodus narrative as it recounts God's instructions to Moses: "And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them" (Exodus 7:5). On the surface, it appears that Hobbes simply uses the concept of salvation in a way that also reframes the relationship between political and theological salvation. With a bit more reflection, it is clear that he has reframed the relationship between political and theological salvation in a way that tames the original theological nature of salvation, making it malleable so that its seditious nature could be examined.

Secondly, it should be noted that Hobbes uses a rhetorical sleight-of-hand even with his way of discussing the role of miracles. Hobbes seems to imply that the

role of miracles is simply to "serve as arguments, to approve the prophet's calling." However, it is clear that the intended purpose of the miracles in the Exodus narrative was not so much aimed at convincing the people of Israel to follow Moses but at convincing Pharaoh that his rule was not the ultimate sovereign and that he must set the people of Israel free. Simply put, the miracles of the Exodus narrative were aimed at presenting Yahweh as both supreme and active sovereign and therefore Israel's God of salvation. This is made clear in the songs of Moses and Israel, sang after the people of Israel had been rescued from Egypt: "I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation" (Exodus 15:1-2). Moses was effectively preaching a new religion to Pharoah, which violates one of the roles, according to Hobbes, that confirms a prophet is true. Moreover, Pharaoh's reaction to Moses could be seen as acting entirely in accord with Hobbes's teaching—that prophets who stir up revolt are not true prophets. According to Hobbes's teaching, those who stir up revolt are not true prophets and should be put to death. According to *Levaithan*, Pharaoh's failure was that he did not try Moses for sedition and have him put to death.

Thirdly, Hobbes's use of substitution has clearly rearranged the chronological ordering of the exodus narrative. Hobbes tells us that the substitution of the phrase "*revolt from the Lord your God*" for the supposedly equivalent "*revolt from your King*" is logical because Israel "had made God their King by pact at the foot of Mount *Sinai*." This is not the case, however. Israel had not made God its king until later in

the narrative. According to Hobbes's logic, after being freed from Egypt, the people of Israel were in a state of nature and war. Perhaps one would suggest that Moses had been chosen to be their sovereign or that God had been their sovereign all along. Hobbes, however, explicitly says in his discussion of the Ten Commandments that until Mount Sinai "there was no written Law of God" (xlii, 281).

While Hobbes will explain later that, while Abraham was not considered a king, it was with him that the covenant was made which was renewed at Mount Sinai. He explains that the contract between God and Abraham was the act that made Abraham and posterity subjected to God's positive law (xxxv, 217). Moreover, Hobbes also points to Exodus 18, recounting for his reader the fact that Moses "following the counsell of Jethro his Father-in-law, did appoint Judges, and Officers over the people, such as feared God; and of these, were those Seventy, whom God by putting upon them Moses spirit, inclined to aid Moses in the Administration of the Kingdome" (xxxvi, 229-30). Yet Hobbes will want to convince us that "That part of the Scripture, which was first Law, was the Ten Commandements, written in two Tables of Stone, and delivered by God himselfe to Moses; and by Moses made known to the people. Before that time there was no written Law of God, who as yet having not chosen any people to bee his peculiar Kingdome, had given no Law to men, but the Law of Nature, that is to say, the Precepts of Naturall Reason, written in every mans own heart" (xlii, 281). So, one must ask whether Hobbes considers Israel to have been God's chosen people, "God's peculiar Kingdom," prior to the giving of the Ten Commandments, or not.

In order to make his discussion consistent, Hobbes could have simply stated that Israel had been a peculiar kingdom from the time of Abraham. What seems clear is that Hobbes expects his readers to assume that the miracles performed by Moses, who was the representative of God to Pharaoh, were not acts of sedition because the people of Israel were subjects of the positive kingdom of God, not Pharaoh. A quick review of the narrative makes it clear, however, that from the time that Joseph provided food for his brothers and the people of Israel, they had made Egypt their dwelling even as they expected God would someday return them to their homeland (Genesis 50: 21-26). If followed to its logical conclusion, however, acknowledging this simple fact would undermine Hobbes's project. On the surface, Hobbes wants it to be clear that, at least in the current period of regeneration, there is no possibility whatsoever that there can be a people whose God is active and able to bring about the kind of absolute salvation Hobbes described in a way that is contrary to the civil salvation brought about through the certainty of reason which has been set up through his political theory. Reflecting on this example, however, makes one ask why Hobbes has chosen this particular scripture. In fact, it would have simply been easier to choose the exodus narrative as an example of how religion can undermine civil authority. Explicitly doing this, however, would do more than turn martyrs like Sir Thomas More into political trouble makers—it would reveal the entire foundation of Hebrew and Christian faith as a seditious nightmare for any kind of civil society that does not rely on the kind of divine intervention and miraculous power displayed by

the Hebrew God for his people. Perhaps this is Hobbes's intention, revealed only to his more careful readers.

The Ten Seditious Commandments

Similarly, it is important to notice the role that Moses and the Ten Commandments play in Hobbes's retelling of the exodus narrative compared with the actual text of the narrative itself. This is important not only because Hobbes claims that this is the first part of scripture that became positive law but precisely because they are the laws that deal with God's sovereignty, the worship of foreign gods, and what makes the commandments of God obligatory.

> That part of the Scripture, which was first Law, was the Ten Commandements, written in two Tables of Stone, and delivered by God himselfe to Moses; and by Moses made known to the people. Before that time there was no written Law of God, who as yet having not chosen any people to bee his peculiar Kingdome, had given no Law to men, but the Law of Nature, that is to say, the Precepts of Naturall Reason, written in every mans own heart. Of these two Tables, the first containeth the law of Soveraignty; 1. That they should not obey, nor honour the Gods of other Nations, in these words, *Non habebis Deos alienos coram me*, that is, *Thou shalt not have for Gods, the Gods that other Nations worship; but onely me*: whereby they were forbidden to obey, or honor, as their King and Governour, any other God, than him that spake unto them then by Moses, and afterwards by the High Priest. 2. That they *should not make any Image to represent him*; that is to say, they were not to choose to themselves, neither in heaven, nor in earth, any Representative of their own

fancying, but obey Moses and Aaron, whom he had appointed to that office. 3. That *they should not take the Name of God in vain*; that is, they should not speak rashly of their King, nor dispute his Right, nor the commissions of Moses and Aaron, his Lieutenants. 4. That *they should every Seventh day abstain from their ordinary labour,* and employ that time in doing him Publique Honor. The second Table containeth the Duty of one man towards another, as *To honor Parents; Not to kill; Not to Commit Adultery; Not to steale; Not to corrupt Judgment by false witnesse*; and finally, *Not so much as to designe in their heart the doing of any injury one to another.* The question now is, Who it was that gave to these written Tables the obligatory force of Lawes. There is no doubt but that they were made Laws by God himselfe: But because a Law obliges not, nor is Law to any, but to them that acknowledge it to be the act of the Soveraign, how could the people of Israel that were forbidden to approach the Mountain to hear what God said to Moses, be obliged to obedience to all those laws which Moses propounded to them? Some of them were indeed the Laws of Nature, as all the Second Table; and therefore to be acknowledged for Gods Laws; not to the Israelites alone, but to all people: But of those that were peculiar to the Israelites, as those of the first Table, the question remains; saving that they had obliged themselves, presently after the propounding of them, to obey Moses, in these words (Exod. 20.19.) *Speak them thou to us, and we will hear thee; but let not God speak to us, lest we die*. It was therefore onely Moses then, and after him the High Priest, whom (by Moses) God declared should administer this his peculiar Kingdome, that had on Earth, the power to make this short Scripture of the Decalogue to bee Law in the Common-wealth of Israel. But

> Moses, and Aaron, and the succeeding High Priests were the Civill Soveraigns. Therefore hitherto, the Canonizing, or making of the Scripture Law, belonged to the Civill Soveraigne. (xlii, 281-82)

In an earlier discussion in chapter thirty-six about the word of God, Hobbes had defined the word of God and made an important distinction between words spoken *by* God and words spoken *about* God. In discussing the word of God in relation to the Ten Commandments, Hobbes goes on to break these down further. Scripture—which is holy history—is the word of God in one sense; God's power, wisdom , and decree is the word of God in a metaphorical sense; God's words spoken to his prophets is yet another and the proper sense. Hobbes goes on to clarify, "For example, though these words, *I am the Lord thy God, &c.* to the end of the Ten Commandments, were spoken by God to Moses; yet the preface, *God spake these words and said*, is to be understood for the words of him that wrote the holy history" (xxxvi, 223). This is important in our discussion of the passage about the Ten Commandments from chapter forty-two quoted above because Hobbes tacitly acknowledges that the commandments begin not with "*Non habebis Deos alienos coram me*," but with "I am the Lord thy God…" Perhaps, even more importantly, in neither instance does Hobbes include the rest of the sentence which continues, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt" (Exodus 20:2). Hobbes does, however, mention this important part of the narrative when recounting that the people of Israel had committed idolatry and worshiped the golden calf as their savior, rather than God (xlv, 363). In this particular passage from Hobbes, if it had

been acknowledged that the commandments begin with a statement that God had saved Israel out of the land of Egypt, the contrast between Israel's God and the Pharaoh would be apparent. In other words, Hobbes would have presented obedience to the Pharaoh, the sovereign of Egypt, as idolatry, thus making Pharaoh a false savior in the same way as scripture presented the golden calf and obedience to the Hebrew God would have been shown to be in direct conflict with Hobbes's own theory.

The first commandment. In describing the Ten Commandments, Hobbes separates them into two categories (or tables). The laws of sovereignty are on the first table; the laws of duty are on the second. In recounting the first commandment, Hobbes acknowledges that the commandment is aimed at separating Israel from other nations in that the people of Israel "should not obey, nor honor the gods of other nations." In Hobbes's view, however, this is aimed at maintaining the established authority of the sovereign. While they are clearly laws written by God, Hobbes explains, they only became obligatory and thus only truly became laws once it was decreed by the civil sovereign. This is because, as has been discussed already, laws are only obligatory when one has given over rights to a sovereign through a social contract. Just as the natural laws are not obligatory in any real sense until a sovereign is set up, the Ten Commandments could not be obligatory until God had made a direct covenant with Israel.

Hobbes explains that the Ten Commandments became obligatory for the people of Israel when they set Moses up to be their civil sovereign. If this were the

case before Sinai (as Hobbes falsely presents here), this means that they were rebellious, seditious subjects prior to leaving Egypt. When the people of Israel had declared, "*Speak them thou to us, and we will hear thee; but let not God speak to us, lest we die*," they had chosen Moses to be their leader. Yet, as we have already seen, Hobbes knew Moses had set up a system of judges at the advice of Jethro and thus had been their leader even before the establishing of the commandments. In the passage from chapter thirty-two quoted above, Hobbes clearly acknowledges that Aaron, along with Moses, had been appointed to the office of lieutenants. Would Israel not simply have been following the direction of Aaron, who himself was the one to fashion the gold into the image of a calf (Exodus 32: 1-4)? At this time, however, because Moses had not yet brought down the Ten Commandments from the mountain, it cannot be said that Israel disobeyed the first and second commandments retrospectively. Nevertheless, Israel was punished and three thousand died (Exodus 32:27-29). All of this occurs even before God had given any positive law to Israel through Moses. Strictly speaking, according to Hobbes's teaching, this clearly makes God's punishment unjust.

It is also important to notice the peculiar way Hobbes has interpreted this first commandment. Instead of quoting from the King James English, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," he quotes the Latin, "*Non habebis Deos alienos coram me.*" Hobbes has not used the Latin version to quote any of the other commandments. It would seem that the purpose for this odd choice is that he wants to translate the word *alienos* as referring specifically to "gods of other nations," rather than the "no other

gods" from the King James translation. Certainly, this does seem to match with the rendering of the English word 'alien'. The original Hebrew word אחר, however, can mean 'another' or 'strange.' The reason this is important is that this commandment to have "no other gods" could have easily included sovereigns that demanded allegiance before the Hebrew God. Since dealing with the disputation between the authority of God and the sovereign is at the heart of what Hobbes is aiming to address, this passage must be clarified completely as fitting under the scheme of the salvation narrative presented by *Leviathan*. In other words, *alienos* must explicitly be translated to mean 'alien' and not 'other,' 'strange,' 'gentile,' 'pagan,' or 'false,' as would have been clearly understood from the normal Hebraic understanding of the commandment. Otherwise, the first commandment would be universally applicable to all, not just the Israelites. This becomes particularly important in relation to the second commandment, since making the distinction between false gods and foreign gods rules out the possibility that worshiping or honoring a pagan king can be somehow seen as a form of idolatry. Another way to put it is that this commandment loses all political force except that Hobbes wants to use it to argue that keeping faithful to the sovereign and preventing sedition, a major component of his own theory, is consistent with the biblical narrative. Therefore, actions like those of Sir Thomas More are to be seen as inconsistent with scripture and thus cannot be considered martyrdom (xlii, 272). Alternatively, for those who are thinking this through, the parts of the Hebrew Scriptures that Hobbes selects seem to indicate that

the relationship between the Israelites and their God as presented in the Biblical narrative is not consistent with sound political teaching.

One should compare the way Hobbes understand this commandment and the rest of the entire narrative of the Hebrew Scriptures. While it would be beyond the space of the current discussion to point out every such instance where obedience to the established civil sovereign was considered idolatry and Hebrew adherence to the first and second commandments brought about political problems with pagan authorities, several individual stories come to mind. Take for instance the charge against the Jews and their refusal to bow to and worship the golden image of king Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon; this passage included the famous story of the salvation of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.[61] Similarly, consider the story of the book of Esther. The conflict in this entire story begins because Mordecai, who had been given a prominent position in the court of King Ahasuerus, would not bow down before Haman the Agagite. Haman thus accused the entire race of the Jews, charging that "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws."[62]

It may be argued that these are stories where the Jews lived in foreign lands. There are, however, several examples of prophets who challenged the "established authority" of Israel. One example might be the story of the prophet Elijah who King Ahab called the "troubler of Israel."[63] Elijah was rightly given this title, according to the Hebrew text, because, on behalf of Yahweh he challenged the worship of the

Baal. Baal is a prime example of a "foreign" God that had been sanctioned under the authority of Jezebel. With Hobbes's rendering and interpretation of the Latin *Non habebis Deos alienos coram me* as "Thou shalt not have for gods, the gods that other nations," the story of the prophet Elijah becomes ridiculous. The story of Elijah ends with the victory of Yahweh in a challenge with Jezebel's pagan priests on Mt. Caramel, eventually ending in their slaughter.[64] Similarly, Elijah prophesied the death of King Ahab because he had murdered Naboth.[65]

Clearly, for Hobbes, it was important to describe that the current period is a time of regeneration where God is not active and the power of the prophet has been emasculated. Should a modern reader of the story of Elijah assume that divine revelation were possible, Hobbes's entire theory would break down and the sovereign would always be in fear of judgment for requiring worship by his subjects (as with the stories in Daniel and Esther) or establishing a religion that stands in competition with the Hebrew God.

This first commandment strikes at the core of Hobbes's theory. In relation to the first commandment, Hobbes explains that the desire to change one's government is like the breaching of this commandment. That is, even if people seek to reform the commonwealth, by their disobedience they will find that they have destroyed it. The prosperity and success of a government is not dependent, for Hobbes, on whether it is aristocratic or democratic, but specifically on its ability to maintain order and obedience. "Take away in any kind of State, the Obedience, (and consequently the

Concord of the People,) and they shall not onely not flourish, but in short time be dissolved" (xxx, 177; cf. xlv, 357).

Again, a deeper second reading reveals that Hobbes clearly means to draw attention to more than he says on the surface. There is no doubt that the entire first commandment is contrary to Hobbes's theory of political salvation. In the passage from chapter thirty-six, Hobbes had made the distinction between the preface and the actual words of God. In saying so, he explains that "*I am the Lord thy God, &c.* to the end of the Ten Commandments" were the words of God, and that the beginning of the Ten Commandments began with "*I am the Lord thy God.*" This is important because Hobbes has led his readers to believe that his aim in discussing the Ten Commandments is to supply the reasoning behind what made the commandments obligatory as law. Once the laws are obligatory, then the people of Israel can be seen as constituting a kingdom with positive laws. In essence, by accepting the Ten Commandments as laws, the nation of Israel is born as a positive kingdom. However, hidden in the exact wording he has failed to present the reasoning for the laws being obligatory was not because Israel had chosen Moses as the sovereign but because God had acted through Moses who stood as a prophet in opposition to the authority of the Pharaoh well before the written laws had been issued at Sinai.

Moreover, this first commandment, before Hobbes's reinterpretation, encourages exactly the kind of wild belief about God that Hobbes sees as dangerously seditious and in need of domesticating. When the more reflective reading of this passage is considered, the elements in the salvation narrative of the exodus story are

clearly the same as those in Hobbes's narrative construction of political salvation. The people of Israel begin in a state of misery and war, a covenant is made with a sovereign, and a system of laws becomes obligatory. What is important, however, is where the salvation happens. In Hobbes's narrative, salvation happens as a result of human effort after the making of a covenant. In this very discussion about the Ten Commandments and the moment that Israel became a positive kingdom, salvation has happened prior to the making of the covenant. When one considers that leviathan is expected serve a messianic role in rescuing humanity from the chaos of the state of nature, the key phrase Hobbes has intentionally left out of the discussion—"I am the Lord your God that rescued you from Egypt"—holds a particular significance. One might see that Hobbes's original suggestion about the command from Deuteronomy that "revolt from the Lord your God" is meant to be equivalent to "revolt from your king" takes an important new meaning. *Non habebis Deos alienos coram me* no longer means just means "no foreign God," but "no God other than leviathan."

The second commandment. Hobbes goes into detail to explain the content of the second commandment (and puts it in relation to the first) in his discussion about idolatry. In doing this, he is able to make a radical reinterpretation of these commandments and allow for a distinction between civil worship and divine worship. Hobbes is clear that this distinction must be made. Hobbes explains that those who distinguish between civil worship and divine worship in terms of the service of slaves and the service of devotees "deceive themselves." Instead, the distinction is made on the basis of the intention of the worshiper (xlv, 357-358). For Hobbes, civil worship

becomes idolatry when the civil sovereign receives divine worship and people pray to the civil sovereign for fair weather or only the things which God can provide. When a king, however, compels a person to divine worship through the threat of corporal punishment, this is not idolatry for Hobbes; the individual may outwardly be obeying the sovereign while inwardly continuing to honor God. Because he does it out of fear, it ceases to become his act and becomes the act of the sovereign (xlv, 359-360).

What becomes clear in looking at the way Hobbes reinterprets the Ten Commandments is that Moses is seen as the civil sovereign who is able to make the laws of God obligatory. The Ten Commandments are no longer to be understood as laws of God which are to be obeyed because the Lord rescued them from Egypt but because they had chosen Moses to be the mouthpiece of God to them. Hobbes repeats this point several times to make sure it is clear. The covenant God made with Abraham, then renewed with Isaac and Jacob, was dormant until the people of Israel were freed from Egypt and arrived at the foot of Mount Sinai. From this time, they became a peculiar kingdom of God where Moses was the Lieutenant. This meant that the authority of Moses, just as with the authority of any other prince, was grounded in the consent of the people and their promise to obey him (xl, 250-251; cf. xxxv, 217-218; xlii, 281-282).

Therefore, this also explains the expectation of absolute salvation—salvation which Hobbes makes clear is offered by God to Israel, according to the Hebrew Scriptures—is not the basis on which laws are to be followed. Neither is God to be

obeyed because he is the Creator, or that he is trustworthy, or because of his "irresistible power" (xxxi, 214).[66] Rather, it is the command of the civil sovereign that makes all laws obligatory, even divine ones. Without the civil force of the laws, the laws would remain simply laws of nature and therefore not obligatory. The reason for this is that Hobbes needs to present the laws as having obligatory force which is clearly derived from the covenant the people made with each other when they gave up their rights. In other words, the Sinai covenant was not a covenant between God and Israel but between the people of Israel who all consented to follow Moses as the lawgiver and the mouthpiece of God.

As has already been discussed, laws in Hobbes's political theory are only obligatory when one gives up rights through the scheme of a social contract for the sake of gaining salvation. However, this is clearly not the narrative order through which the Hebrew story of the exodus is explained in scripture. Instead, the Hebrew Scriptures tell of a different order. It was because God has rescued the people of Israel out of Egypt, and that salvation from chaos and death came first, that the Hebrew people were willing to trust God to save them from any situation in the future. This story for the Hebrew people was expected to be told "from generation to generation." Constantly the prophets reminded the people of Israel that God was their savior and the one who rescued them out of slavery and bondage. It was even on this basis that any idea of resurrection and life-after-death came to be expected from God, giving birth to the central theological ideas of salvation presented in the New Testament.[67]

Biblical Narrative Logic and Order. In summary, anyone familiar with the narrative of the biblical account of the exodus will see that it presents a story of salvation in the following stages: 1) Egypt was, for Israel, a state of desperation and need; 2) from Moses's calling at the burning bush, then the miracles, plagues, and splitting of the Sea of Reeds, the Hebrew God intervened to save Israel from the horrors of Egypt; 3) a representative—Moses—was chosen both by God (at the burning bush) and the people of Israel (at the foot of Mt. Sinai); and 4) God made a covenant with the people of Israel, who then became obligated to obey the Ten Commandments *because* God had brought them out of Egypt.

With these clarifications in mind, when one rereads the entire passage from Deuteronomy 13 again with fresh eyes, the sentence—"if a prophet rise amongst you, or a dreamer of dreams, and shall pretend the doing of a miracle, and the miracle come to pass; if he say, let us follow strange gods, which thou hast not known, thou shalt not hearken to him"—now comes to mean any Jewish or Christian believer that actually takes the first and second commandments at their word. In contrast, the traditional Jewish or faithful Christian reading, prior to Hobbes's reinterpretation, would have had a hard time seeing this commandment—"But that prophet and dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he hath spoken to you to revolt from the Lord your God"—without claiming it is in direct opposition to teachings exactly like that of Hobbes, as well as his theory and the political order his theory proposes. In other words, the traditional believer would have considered the Ten

Commandments to be universally applicable, not just applicable to Israel as a peculiar people, making Hobbes's 'leviathan' a "foreign God" and a "false image."

Conclusion

Thus, what William Cavanaugh had suggested about the theological-political reading of Hobbes has shown to be the case, that the most important interpretive insights about Hobbes's political theory derives from his usurpation of salvation ideas. That Hobbes intended to minimalize the Christian ideas about salvation for the sake of his political agenda was never much of a question. What has been shown here, however, is that the engineering of a system of comprehensive salvation without divine aid was the bedrock that underlay Hobbes's entire theory and narrative. This, then, complements the scholarship on Hobbes from Pocock, Strauss, Schmitt, and Schwartz.

Hobbes's use of the narrative structure to tell a new story that was expected to be more trustworthy than other historical accounts is telling. It actually assumes that the biblical narrative was not only untrustworthy but also deceptive and downright dangerous. What one should ask, however, is the ultimate question about the real intent of the author. In his theory, we see that the salvation formula fits clearly. The individuals in Hobbes's hellish state of nature are clearly those who are in need of rescue; it is they who will be saved. The creation of the civil state following Hobbes's design will be the action that puts salvation into motion. Who is the savior in Hobbes's story? It first appears that the sovereign would hold that title except the

sovereign is obligated to the salvation covenant which he or she did not create. If we return to the first few phrases of Hobbes's introduction, where we began, the clues are now more evident.

Pocock suggested the state itself was the messiah; Craig asserted it was reason. But Hobbes's theory presented both reason and the state more as tools to be utilized for the sake of salvation than the actual being that could be considered "the author of salvation"[68] that would replace the biblical God. What is apparent from the argument throughout this thesis is that Hobbes used reason to construct the state himself; that is, it was the Monster of Malmesbury himself who authored the story of salvation.

In conclusion, what this thesis has shown is that in *Leviathan*, not only does the usurpation of the salvation narrative underlie Hobbes's political teaching, but in his choice of these particular portions of the Hebrew Scriptures, Hobbes aims to present to the careful reader that scripture is in violation of the political teaching revealed by reason alone. Thus, *Leviathan* presents an apparent but superficial attempt to show that scripture is in harmony with Hobbes's political teaching as based strictly on reason. *Leviathan* also presents a usurpation of the Hebrew salvation narrative to uphold that political teaching and eliminate all competing authorities on Earth. Also, however, *Leviathan*, for the reflective reader, serves as a veiled attack on scripture, presenting Moses as a seditious false prophet and the Israelites as rebellious subjects of the Pharaoh of Egypt.

NOTES

1. As Helmut Schelsky presents it, Hobbes's theoretical system of authority is meant to be more than a thought experiment. *Leviathan*, therefore, is a theory of political action. Like any political philosopher, Hobbes hopes—though acknowledging it may seem impossible—that the problems he illuminates and the solutions he suggests will someday become reality so that the problems he addresses, thus, will be eradicated. In fact, as I will readily point out, Hobbes believes he has "sufficiently, or probably" laid out the doctrines of morality and law in a way that other philosophers had not yet been able to do. Though I will quote a portion of this quite soon in the essay, it is vital to the current discussion to show here that Hobbes says as much himself.

> I am at the point of believing this my labour, as uselesse, and the Common-wealth of Plato; For he also is of opinion that it is impossible for the disorders of State, and change of Governments by Civill Warre, ever to be taken away, till Soveraigns be Philosophers. But when I consider again, that the Science of Naturall Justice, is the onely Science necessary for Soveraigns, and their principall Ministers; and that they need not be charged with the Sciences Mathematicall, (as by Plato they are,) further, than by good Lawes to encourage men to the study of them; and that neither Plato, nor any other Philosopher hitherto, hath put into order, and sufficiently, or probably proved all the Theoremes of Morall doctrine, that men may learn thereby, both how to govern, and how to obey; I recover some hope, that one time or other, this writing of mine, may fall into

> the hands of a Soveraign, who will consider it himselfe, (for it is short, and I think clear,) without the help of any interested, or envious Interpreter; and by the exercise of entire Soveraignty, in protecting the Publique teaching of it, convert this Truth of Speculation, into the Utility of Practice. (xxxi, 193)

What is important, however, is determining exactly what the problems are that Hobbes is addressing. What are the major problems that cause war and strife? Carl Schmitt quotes Helmut Schelsky as saying that "Hobbes challenges every theory of state fraught by religion, assuming thereby a place among the great political thinkers. His companions on this track are Machiavelli, Vico, and, more recently, Nietzsche and Sorel." See Helmut Shelsky, "Die Totalität des Staates bei Hobbes," in *Archiv für Rechts- und Sozialphilosophie* 31, no. 2 (1938). For Schmitt, echoing this quote from Schelsky in his discussion with Leo Strauss, Hobbes's practical aim is restoring the "original unity" of politics and religion. See Carl Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the state theory of Thomas Hobbes: meaning and failure of a political symbol*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 10-11. For Strauss, however, Hobbes's practical aim was to show that revelation and reason were utterly opposed and that only the latter could bring peace. This point will be drawn out further later on in the current essay. See Leo Strauss, "On the Basis of Hobbes's Political Philosophy," in *What Is Political Philosophy?: And Other Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 170-196. A good discussion on this dialogue between Schmitt and Strauss can be found in Anna Schmidt "The problem of Carl

Schmitt's Political Theology," in *Interpretation: Journal of Political Philosophy*.36 (3) (Summer 2009): 219-252

2. N. T. Wright, "Start by Understanding Salvation." On Faith. *The Washington Post*, June 8, 2007.

3. Michael Root, "The Narrative Structure of Soteriology," *Modern Theology* 2, no. 2 (1986): 145-158.

4. Hobbes explains in his letter of dedication to Francis Godolphin that he is primarily concerned with the "Seat of Power." Quentin Skinner explains that this phrase is meant to be a summary of Hobbes's theory of public authority. Skinner sees in this phrase a major puzzle, that there is a real difficulty in understanding how it can be possible for the state—which is an abstraction and a collection of individuals—to take responsibility for the consequences of its actions. Skinner aims to answer this question through exegetically making sense of Hobbes's theory of persons, actors, authors, and representation, and through examining the sixteenth chapter of *Leviathan*. Seeing that Hobbes is the author of *Leviathan*, one asks how Hobbes sees himself as being represented in his own theory and what this means in relation to his concern about the "seat of sovereignty." See Quentin Skinner, "Hobbes and the purely artificial person of the state," *Visions of Politics*, Vol. 3, *Hobbes and Civil Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 177-208.

5. Michael Joseph Oakeshott, *Hobbes on Civil Association* (London: Liberty Fund, 2000).

6. Ibid., 77.

7. See Noel Malcolm, "A summary biography of Hobbes" in Tom Sorell, The Cambridge companion to Hobbes (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 36.

8. Oakeshott, *Hobbes on Civil Association,* 77.

9. Ibid., 79.

10. J. G. A. Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time; Essays on Political Thought and History* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), 27.

11. Ibid., 173-74.

12. Patricia Springborg, "Leviathan and the Problem of Ecclesiastical Authority," *Political Theory.* 3, no. 3 (1975): 289-303.

13. Kinch Hoekstra, "Hobbes on the Natural Condition of Mankind" in *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's Leviathan*, 109-27.

14. Ibid., 112-13.

15. Roberto Farneti, "Hobbes on Salvation" in *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's Leviathan*, 291-308.

16. Luc Borot, "History in Hobbes's Thought" in *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes,* 305.

17. Ibid., 320-21.

18. Bryan Garsten, "Religion and Representation in Hobbes" in *Leviathan, or the Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill*, ed. Ian Shapiro (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 519-46.

19. Quentin Skinner, "Hobbes on Representation," *European Journal of Philosophy* 13, no. 2 (2005): 155-184.

20. Leon Harold Craig, *The Platonian Leviathan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 47.

21. Ibid. 559n21.

22. Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis & Its Genesis,* trans. Elsa M. Sinclair (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).

23. Ibid., 5.

24. Ibid., xi.

25. Ibid., x; cf. 143.

26. Ibid., 74.

27. Ibid., 16.

28. Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 92.

29. Ibid., 95.

30. Ibid., 96.

31. Carl Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes: Meaning and Failure of a Political Symbol*, trans. George Schwab and Erna Hilfstein (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 83.

32. Ibid., 42.

33. Ibid., 57.

34. Ibid., 32.

35. Joel Schwartz, "Hobbes & the Two Kingdoms of God," *Polity,* 18, no. 1 (1985): 7-24.

36. William T. Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination* (London: T & T Clark, 2002).

37. Ibid., 10.

38. The Hebrew word for 'salvation' is ישע 'yasha' and, between it and its cognates, this word is used 353 times in the Hebrew Scriptures. In the Niphal form (one of the seven major verb stems of the Hebrew language, which usually denotes a passive voice) 'yasha' means to be liberated/ be saved/be delivered or to be saved (in battle)/be victorious. In the Hiphil form (another major verb stem that expresses an active voice), it means to save/deliver, to save from moral troubles, or to give victory to. The Septuagint verbs σώζω 'sozo' and σωτήριο 'soteria' or the most use to translate the different forms of ישע. See George V. Wigram and James Strong "3467 ישע" *The new Englishman's Hebrew concordance: coded to Strong's concordance*

numbering system (Peabody, Mass: Hendrikson 1984), Print. See also Brown, Driver, Briggs and Gesenius, "Hebrew Lexicon entry for Yasha`" in *The Old Testament Hebrew Lexicon*, <http://www.searchgodsword.org/lex/heb/view.cgi?number=3467>.

39. See Michael Root, "The Narrative Structure of Soteriology."

40. Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2007), 329.

41. Ibid., 330.

42. See Athanasius and C.S. Lewis, *On the Incarnation: the treatise De incaratione Verbi Dei* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 93.45-158.

43. A good discussion of these various models can be found in Alister E. McGrath, *Christian theology: an introduction*, 349-54.

44. Robert Boyle, "Some Considerations Touching the Style of the Holy Scriptures," (London: for Henry Herringman, 1661), 157. Quoted in Roberto Farneti, "Hobbes on Salvation" in *The Cambridge companion to Hobbes's Leviathan*, ed. Patricia Springborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 292. See also Jacob Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2004), 1-5.

45. Roberto Farneti, "Hobbes on Salvation" in *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes's Leviathan*, 291-308.

46. Hobbes, *English Works,* vol. viii, p. viii.

47. On Hobbes's method, see J. W. N. Watkins, *Philosophy and Politics in Hobbes*, 129-35.

48. Thomas Hobbes, *English Works,* vol. ii, p. xiv.

49. Pocock, *Politics, Language and Time,* 156.

50. Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis & Its Genesis*, ix.

51. I have repeatedly pointed this out. (See endnote 1.) Cf. Leo Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, 94.

52. *Leviathan,* "Introduction," p. 2. There are a few passages without which a full interpretation of the work would be impossible. In *Leviathan*, these passages would include the last paragraph in the "Introduction," which outlines the relationship between wisdom and the passions, and the last paragraph in the thirty-first chapter, which is also the last paragraph in the first half of the book and lies as the centermost paragraph on the centermost page of the entire work. See Leon Craig's, *The Platonian* Leviathan, 2010.

53. Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 123-25.

54. This is especially true if one reads into Hobbes's state of nature like Patricia Springborg, who claims that Hobbes's depiction of hell is essentially "an eternal state of nature, analogous to the state of permanent civil war." See Patricia Springborg, "Leviathan and the Problem of Ecclesiastical Authority," *Political Theory* 3 (1975): 295. See also, Leon Craig, *The Platonian Leviathan*, 554n4.

55. See Edwin Curley, "I Durst Not Write So Boldly…", 17-25.

56. These six are listed as follows in *Leviathan* (xvii, 86-87):

(1) Humans are continually competitive.

(2) The common good for humans differs from the private good, as human beings are constantly comparing themselves.

(3) Humans constantly find fault with administration, each thinking himself or herself more apt to govern.

(4) Humans use their words to confuse good and evil, troubling the public peace for their own private pleasures.

(5) Humans are most trouble when they are at ease, for this is when they attempt to show off their wisdom and try to control the actions of those in control.

(6) Human agreements are not natural, but artificial through covenants that require a common power to make them lasting.

57. An excellent way of expressing this idea can be found in the discussion between John and Reason in C. S. Lewis's masterpiece, *The Pilgrim's Regress*. Here, Reason asks John, "Is it surprising that things should look strange if you see them as they are not? If you take an organ out of a man's body—or a longing out of the dark part of a man's mind—and give it to the one the shape and colour, and to the other the self-consciousness, which they never have in reality, would you expect them to be other than monstrous?" See C. S. Lewis, *The pilgrim's regress: an allegorical apology for Christianity, reason, and romanticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 62.

58. See Carl Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the state theory of Thomas Hobbes: meaning and failure of a political symbol* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 33.

59. Ibid., 71-72.

60. Pages 247-248 are repeated in the numbering of the 1651 edition, hence "b" references the second occurrence of these pages. It is interesting that pages 257-260 were also omitted in numbering. See the discussion in the 2006 edition of *Leviathan* by G. A. J. Rogers and Karl Schuhmann, p. 71.

61. Daniel 3.

62. Esther 3:8.

63. 1 Kings 18:17.

64. 1 Kings 18:16-40.

65. 1 King 21.

66. Compare this to Alasdair McIntyre's argument that the character of a god provides the basis on which one is able to identify the true God from a false god. See Alasdair MacIntyre 'Which God ought we obey and why?' *Faith and Philosophy*, 3 (1986), 359-371.

67. It has even been argued, as Tom Wright's exegesis makes clear, that it was the expectation of the Jews that God would always save them, especially from pagan political powers, and keep his covenant with the people of Israel. Wright argues that Israel had anthropomorphized the "resurrection of the dead"—meaning political Israel as a nation—which eventually came be expected in the form of the salvific actions of God to raise the dead of individual humans. See N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 85-127.

68. Hebrews 12:2.

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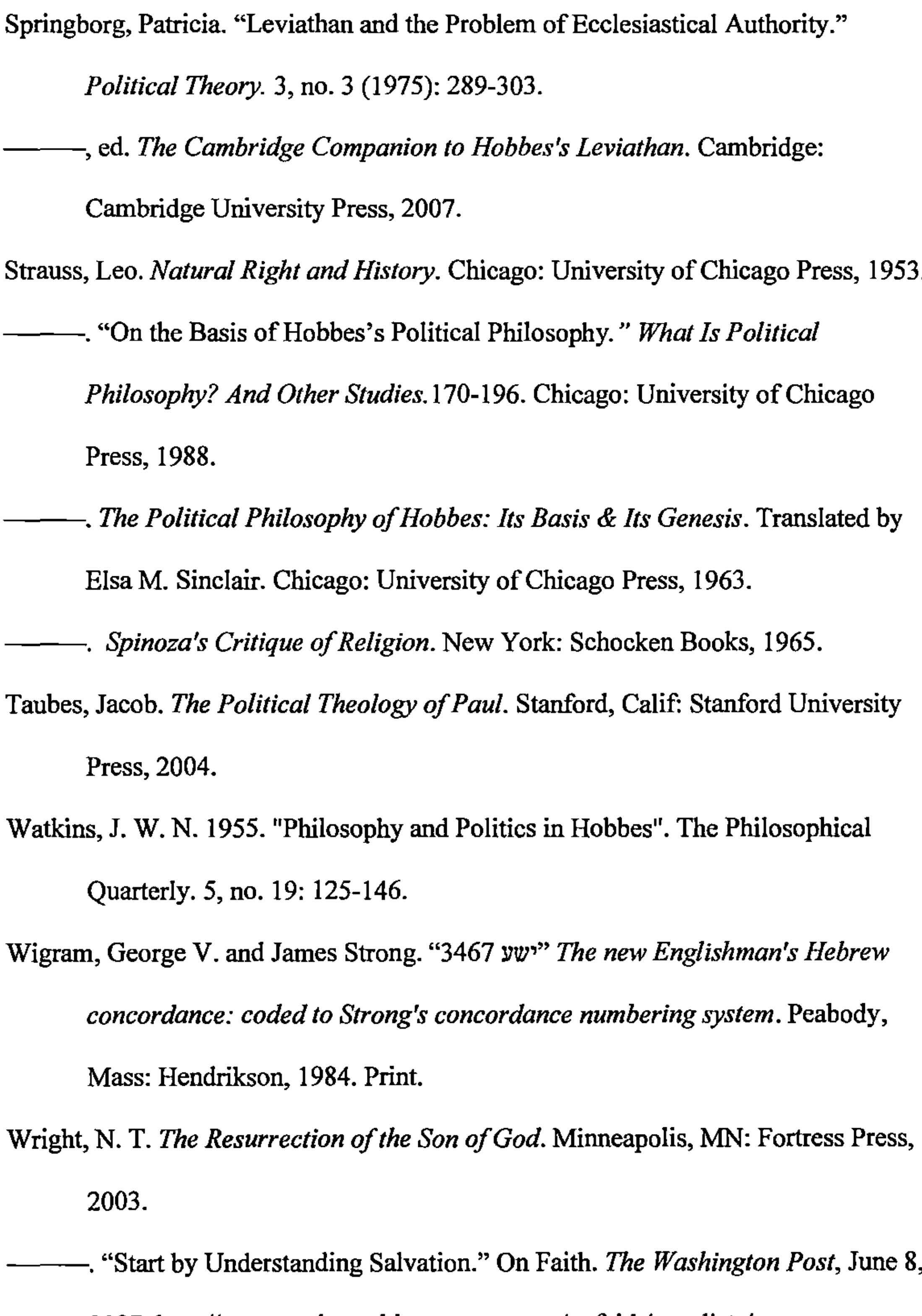

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